



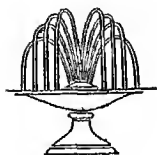
## WELLINGTON'S OFFICERS



LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR THOMAS PICTON, G.C.B.

# WELLINGTON'S OFFICERS

DOUGLAS BELL



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THIS BOOK IS SET IN FONTANA, A NEW TYPE  
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# I

## *Men-at-Arms*

WAR, AS SEEN through the slowly drifting clouds of smoke from cannon and musket, was in every way a personal affair a hundred years ago. Ranges were short, one saw one's enemy, and the cold steel of sword and lance and bayonet was used more often. The opposing hosts were clad in scarlet and white and blue and gold and green, with sunlight flashing on cuirass and helmet, and glittering on the bright points of bayonets in square. The maddening rush of a cavalry charge! The pride and beauty of the noble horses, the thunder of their onset, the jingle of bit and chain, the stern hoarse shout, and the sparkling steel! Yet an hour of battle brought all this glory into mud and dust. Horses and riders, torn by the cannon ball and musket bullet, lay in the trampled mire, while the survivors were splashed to the eyes in mud or smothered with choking dust. The infantry, slipping and sliding or kneeling in mud, were soon coated with it, gunners straining at the wheels of their guns as they strove to get them forward through the slough and slime were plastered from head to foot. A day of battle or even a day's march through clouds of dust or along the slithery muddy tracks that served for roads deprived the gayest uniforms of their beauty and splendour.

The general officers of those days shared the mud and the blood. They were vivid personalities, known, respected, and often loved by their soldiers, not vague Powers miles behind the front line, moving men like pawns upon a board. When the troops were drawn up in line of battle waiting under artillery fire for the moment to advance, the divisional generals and the brigadiers would be calmly pacing their horses up and down the front, steadying their men by heartening words and by their very presence. They frequently led the attacks in person, mounted and conspicuous. In defence, they would be present within the square, supporting the regimental officers as they caused the gaps to be closed, and encouraging the men fighting under the eyes of their chief. Wellington himself was much more of a personality to the rank and file of his army than Haig could ever be to his. Every man had often seen him, knew his long nose and trim spare figure. Haig would be recognised because photographs in the Press had made his countenance familiar to the troops, but very few of his great army had ever seen him. Even the divisional general was a being aloof, and seldom visible to the private soldier.

The officers in high command in the British Expeditionary Force of 1914-18 were almost invariably professional soldiers of the Old Army. A New Army officer seldom rose higher than a brigadier. With the British forces at any rate, the Corps and Army commanders were always professionals. The New Armies of Canada and Australia in time threw up men from civil life who assumed high command, like Currie of

the Canadians and Monash of the Australians. It is interesting to observe that in Wellington's Peninsular Army almost exactly similar conditions obtained. That army was wholly professional as regards its officer corps. Yet a middle-aged civilian stepped straight into the command of a battalion with the rank of honorary colonel, quickly rose to be a general of division, and eventually a corps commander. It was only after years of valiant service that he was granted any substantive rank. That officer was Thomas Graham, the laird of Balgowan.

Martial activity declined during the severe winter months in Spain and Portugal. Both sides went into billets or bell-tents. As a general rule there was no fighting, partly due to the rigours of the climate, and partly to the difficulties of movement over the muddy tracks that were miscalled roads. British officers and men rested and recuperated, finding such sport and amusement as was possible. In the winter of 1810-11 the British Army of the Peninsula was safe within the Lines of Torres Vedras. Thither it had withdrawn, eluding the grasp of Masséna, who had expected to hurl it into the sea. During this lull in the war Lord Wellington's foxhounds met three times a week. Tom Crane, late of a Border pack and the Coldstream Guards, was huntsman, gay and splendid in a pink coat. The French knew all about the hunt, and were confirmed in their conviction that the English were mad. The Army did not bring hounds to France in the last Great War, because the French, as allies, would have thought that we were dangerously insane. Moreover, we were at first too few and too



anxious, and later too numerous and too busy. Field sports were not encouraged.

In the Army of the Peninsula it was the deliberate policy of the Higher Command to exercise, refresh, and recreate the tired and somewhat dispirited formations in the shelter of the lines. In Wellington's opinion, any subaltern who rode well to hounds was likely to make a good officer. Pigeon-shooting, cock-fighting, and coursing for hares were other diversions. After the army had left the Lines, an officer's greyhounds once followed a hare into the French ranks, and the enemy "very politely" returned them. Still later, at Salamanca, Lord Wellington was riding one day along the British battle front, under a long range artillery fire, and accompanied by a numerous staff, when a couple of greyhounds in pursuit of a hare passed close to him. He was talking to Castaños, a Spanish general, at the time, but as soon as he saw the hare he gave the view-halloo, dug spurs in his horse, and went after it at top speed. The Spaniard stared in utter astonishment. Wellington did not stop till he saw the hare killed, when he came coolly trotting back, and resumed the conversation as if nothing remarkable had occurred. Again, his welcoming note to General Graham on that officer's return from sick leave in 1813 was a message from one sportsman to another:

"Upon your arrival, you had better direct your steps towards this village, which we have made as comfortable as we can, and where we shall be happy to see you. *The hounds are in very good trim, and the foxes very plentiful.*"

Football was played by Wellington's officers and men. They were thrown upon their own resources for entertainment, for there were no visiting artistes from home. However, they had impromptu concerts round the camp fires, and the officers organised what they called "private theatricals." Sometimes the troops carried their sporting cries into battle. In 1808 at Roliça in Portugal the 95th Regiment was as usual hotly engaged. There was a slight rise in the ground to their front, and at the summit of the rise two cottages. The French were in possession of these, and they swept the slope with their fire, to the great annoyance of the 95th. The men grew angry. They would stand it no longer. One of the skirmishers, jumping up, rushed forward, crying, "Over, boys! Over, over!" Instantly the whole line took up the cry, "Over, over, over!" They raced across the dry grass like a flame, fixing their sword-bayonets as they ran. The enemy did not wait for them.

Life was precarious in those days for every wounded officer or man. Death and wounds had the same grim terrors at Marathon, Agincourt, Waterloo, and Gallipoli, but in no respect has there been greater change in modern times than in the care bestowed on casualties in battle. In the war of 1914-18, a wounded man, provided his injury was not too serious, was actually envied by his comrades. He would soon be in comparative comfort, not to say luxury, and be borne carefully home by train and boat. He would quickly be out of it all, away from the mud and the squalor and the high explosive. Not so the stricken officer or man of Wellington's army. If he had not bled to death

already, he would be carried on a litter or in a blanket to a dim candle-lit barn or stone-floored church. There the surgeons plied their trade amidst a mess of blood and rags, with their horrid tools, knife and saw and probe. Half the wounded would die anyhow from loss of blood, gangrene or tetanus. Then the wounded one would be placed in an unsprung wagon, with or without straw, drawn by bullocks, enduring a torture that can only be imagined by those who have suffered in a smooth motor ambulance over pitted roads. The very low wheels of the ox-wagons were solid, only roughly circular, and fixed to the axletree, which turned round with a dreadful creaking. An eye-witness, describing the march on Madrid after Salamanca, said that carts to the rear were full of wounded, dying, and exhausted Highlanders, speechless, groaning, the living as pale as the dead, covered with dust and sand from the battlefield. Their feather bonnets and torn tartan plaids were hanging on the pointed stakes which formed the sides of the carts.

Wounded were, in fact, evacuated by any means possible. Officers were often taken to the rear on horseback. One tells how he rode on a horse for twelve miles with a bullet through his liver. Thirst was an ever-present agony, and hard to be assuaged. Water needed transport. Transport was scarce. The base hospital, if there were one, would be any building that could be adapted for the purpose. There were, of course, no nurses, no comforts, nor beds, perhaps straw palliasses on which to lie. Operations proceeded with a haste and bustle, for many awaited their turn. The place would be crowded, the stairs blocked with

fresh arrivals of wounded men, and even in the corridors and upon the landings the sick would be strewn. On reaching a town out of the battle zone, a wounded officer, accompanied by his batman, who might or might not be a soldier, would probably be billeted on a family, who would, if he were fortunate, look after him till he was fit enough to rejoin his regiment.

At the battle of Talavera, an officer named Boothby of the Royal Engineers had his leg smashed by a musket ball. This is how he describes the subsequent amputation. He was in a billet in a private house in the town.

"Fitzpatrick and Miller of the Artillery, Higgins and Bell, staff surgeons, were the gentlemen who at nine o'clock prepared to perform this serious operation upon me. Having laid out the necessary instruments, they put a table in the middle of the room and placed on it a mattress. Then one of the surgeons came to me and exhorted me to summon my fortitude. I told him that he need not be afraid; and Fitzpatrick stopped him, saying that he could answer for me. They then took me to the table and laid me on the mattress. Mr. Miller wished to put a handkerchief over my eyes; but I assured him that it was unnecessary—I would look another way. The tourniquet being adjusted, I saw that the knife was in Fitzpatrick's hand; which being as I wished, I averted my head. . . . The only part of the process in which the pain comes up to the natural anticipation is the first incision round the limb, by which the skin is divided—the sensation of which is as if a prodigious weight were inpulling the

severing edge. The sawing of the bone gives no uneasy sensation; or, if any, it is overpowered by others more violent."

As in the Elizabethan wars, vinegar was still the sole disinfectant, antiseptic, and dressing for wounds. The day before his leg was cut off, Boothby begged Fitzpatrick to do something to alleviate the pain of his wound. The latter took a towel, soaked it in vinegar and water, and applied it to the wound. He changed the lotion every hour or so, and it seemed to give the patient some relief. Flies were an even greater pest then than now, blackening the wounds, blackening the food.

The wounded at Waterloo remained out all night where they fell. They were then gradually removed to what little cover could be found for them in cottages or farmhouses. Eventually, when transport could be obtained, they were taken to Brussels. After the battle of Talavera, a commissary, an officer in what would now be called the Royal Army Service Corps, was passing a convent that had been turned into a hospital, and was shocked by the pitiful cries and groans coming from within. "From one of the windows the amputated arms and legs were being flung out upon a small square below."

Surgeons, who had to have a medical degree or diploma, ranked as captains, and "surgeon's mates" as commissioned officers, after passing a medical examination. There were great military hospitals at Plymouth, Gosport, Portsmouth, and Deal, and at the Duke of York's Hospital at Chelsea. Inoculation was just beginning. In 1799 Dr. Jenner vaccinated the

Coldstream Guards and the 85th Regiment against smallpox for a fee of one hundred guineas. About this time also, regulations and recommendations for life in the tropics were drawn up. They were too often disregarded through indolence and carelessness. Before he had finished with the Peninsular Army, Wellington, with the aid of that devoted medico, Sir James McGrigor, had reorganised and greatly improved its medical services.

Lieutenant Grattan of the 88th, describing a patient in a hospital after Fuentes d'Onoro, says:

"A musket ball had penetrated his right breast, and passing through his lungs came out at his back. He owed his life to the great skill and attention of Drs. Stewart and Bell, of the Third Division. The quantity of blood taken from him was astonishing. Three and sometimes four times a day they would bleed him, and his recovery was one of those extraordinary instances seldom witnessed."

Even at this date, surgeons were constantly bleeding their patients. Boothby had lost a lot of blood from his wound, and had lived for some days since his leg was shattered on nothing but vinegar and water, internally and externally applied, yet before his friend Fitzpatrick came upon the scene and took off the limb, a surgeon had bled him in the arm. Another case may be given. George Simmons, a subaltern officer in the 95th, was wounded in the chest at Waterloo. He found himself in a casualty clearing station. "A good surgeon, a friend of mine," came along to examine his wound. He made a deep incision below the right nipple, and extracted a musket ball from up against

the breastbone. Simmons's lungs were damaged, and he was nearly suffocating. Apparently as a matter of general principle, the surgeon there and then took a quart of blood from his arm. Simmons actually rode twelve miles to his former billet, a private house. The motion of the horse caused blood to well out, and the broken ribs cut the flesh to a jelly. In the next four days he had six quarts of blood taken from him, because "the inflammation ran so high in my lungs." During the next fortnight, while he was very ill, he was bled regularly two or three times a day. Then, being in great pain, two large basins of blood were drawn from his arm. He fainted, and it was half an hour before he could be brought round. No wonder. The surgeon was alarmed. He had a consultation with an eminent physician, who recommended *leeches*. For three days Simmons endured twenty-five or thirty leeches, fresh each day. The anguish was so great that he ordered his servant to kill them all. He lay in a sort of stupor for three days, when a great discharge of pus occurred, and his life was saved.

Typhus was a prevalent disease in the army of those days. It carried off large numbers of the strongest men. Dysentery, too, was frequent, through drinking contaminated water. And ague, or malaria, is often mentioned in the memoirs of the time, though the common "chill" was often put down to "ague." "Bark" was known, and used as a remedy.

It would be well to consider briefly in this place the system of supply and rations organised by the commissaries of Wellington's army. In view of the immense difficulties encountered, and the primitive

transport available, the commissariat was reasonably efficient. It was impossible to rely on bulk supplies from home. The voyage to the Peninsula might take many weeks or even months. In the absence of any means of refrigeration or canning, the food, unless it were "salt junk"—sailors' fare—would deteriorate. Live cattle were sometimes shipped to overcome this difficulty, and flour for bread and biscuit was largely imported. It was, however, necessary to live to a certain extent on the country in Spain as well as in India. Consequently rations were very varied. The men never knew what they were going to get next. It might be fresh beef and bread, or pork and biscuit, or perhaps nothing but goat's flesh and a little pea-flour, to be rolled out thin with a few drops of water, and baked upon a hot stone. In 1794, under the administration of the Treasury, a Corps of Wagoners, the forerunner of the Royal Army Service Corps, had been formed in five companies, with a total strength of six hundred non-commissioned officers and men, one-tenth of them being artificers to keep the vehicles in repair. Unfortunately at first the men were recruited in London from the very dregs of the population, and the Corps began by being hopelessly inefficient. Wellington changed all that. Later, in the Peninsula, he organised a system of transport by pack mules, which was far more effective than cumbersome wagons in that almost roadless territory.

It was only in the depth of winter, from December to February, that there was as a rule any respite from the hard life of a campaigner. During the greater part of the year in the field the troops more often than not



bivouacked in the open. When a battalion of infantry, for example, arrived on its ground for the night, it would be formed into column of companies at distances according to the space available. The company officers, after receiving their orders, would give the command "Pile arms." The troops would lie down in their ranks, cloaks or greatcoats for their bedding, and make themselves as comfortable as they could. Quite possibly they would find themselves in the middle of a ploughed field, and probably it would be raining. If there happened to be a tree within reach, the officers would take possession of it, and hang their spare kit and accoutrements upon its branches. Then they would camp beneath what little shelter it gave. They would barricade themselves in with their saddles or other baggage, light a blazing fire, and sleep as best they might. If they halted when it was too late and dark to see their ground, if in addition it was cold and wet, and they were too near the enemy to take off their kits, and if the food and drink had not come up, conditions were not so happy. They would heartily curse the weather, the staff, the commissariat, even the enemy, but would probably be too weary to keep awake. At all events, they could make a fire, provided there was any dry fuel available. There was hardly ever any need for concealment. The enemy's bivouac fires would be visible not far away. Ranges were short, and outposts and vedettes would have been posted to guard against surprise. Very likely those outposts would be within hailing distance of the enemy's, perhaps on opposite banks of a stream, from which both sides would draw water.

There was a good deal of "live and let live" about war in those days. When the troops were lucky enough to have bell-tents, they were much more comfortable, though storms of wind and rain might mean much bad language and brisk work with a mallet among the tent-pegs. The officers sometimes had the solace of a pipe or a cigar, the men but seldom. There was no tobacco ration. The water supply was an ever-present trouble. It was not chlorinated, and was habitually drunk unboiled, sometimes with disastrous results.

A word must be said about the weapons of the infantry soldier, and in particular the flintlock, muzzle-loading, smooth-bore musket, the famous Brown Bess. In spite of minor improvements, Brown Bess was essentially the same arm that was used in Marlborough's wars. It fired a round leaden bullet, fourteen to the pound, and it weighed nine pounds. Its effective range was barely 200 yards, and it was accurate only up to about ninety. It of course missed fire if the priming was not kept dry, no easy matter in wet weather. The powder was contained in a paper cartridge, the butt end of which had to be bitten off by the teeth. Each soldier was supposed to carry three good flints. The rifle, then also a flintlock muzzle-loader, was just coming into use as an alternative weapon at this time. It had been invented at the close of the eighteenth century by Ezekiel Baker, a London gunmaker, and was tested at Woolwich in 1800 by order of the Ordnance Board, with surprising and gratifying results. At this test a rifle was fired at a circular target six feet in diameter at 300 yards. Eleven

out of twelve shots hit the mark, and even at 400 and 500 yards it was possible to get on. Compared with Brown Bess this was indeed a weapon of precision. The degree of accuracy obtained was due to the spiral grooves or "rifling" in the barrel which caused the bullet to rotate. The weight of this arm was  $9\frac{1}{2}$  pounds, and it was 30 inches long. The bullet was round, weighed twenty to the pound, and was placed in a greased leather patch and rammed home on to the powder. The patches were carried in a box in the butt. Steady shots could be fired at the rate of one a minute.

Although some other light infantry regiments had each a rifle company, the 95th, first raised in 1803, was the only regiment at this period to be armed exclusively with the rifle. It formed part of the famous Light Division, the "Light Bobs," organised and trained by Manningham and Stewart, polished and perfected by Sir John Moore at Shorncliffe Camp. The 95th wore dark green jackets, tight pantaloons, a leather cap for the men, and a shako for the officers. Officers and sergeants carried whistles in a black leather cross-belt. For side-arms the men carried short swords, which could be used as bayonets. A bayonet is to this day called a sword in rifle regiments. Like all infantry they carried a bag of bullets and cartridges. Orders were given by bugle. A bugle is still the device on "rifle" buttons. Buttons were black, and the barrel of the rifle was varnished brown to render the skirmishers less conspicuous. "Rifle" regiments of to-day, like the 95th (The Rifle Brigade) and the 60th (The King's Royal Rifles) still think of themselves as rather

superior infantry, though now all regiments are armed with rifles, and infantry tactics are the same throughout the army.

After the infantry, the spearhead of Wellington's forces, a word is due to the cavalry. Compared to the French, Wellington's cavalry was not numerous, indeed, at first, it was wholly inadequate. Nor was the training so good as that of the infantry. Wellington complained that "our officers of cavalry have acquired a trick of galloping at everything." Their rash pursuit frequently led them into trouble. The men, and therefore the officers, whose responsibility it should be, were often guilty of great slackness in the care of their mounts, though it was hard to keep horses in good condition on a diet of unripe maize and chopped straw, which was all they often had.

A good deal of jealousy existed between the cavalry and the infantry in the British Army. The infantry regarded the horse-soldiers as little better than useless, while the latter looked upon the foot regiments as their social inferiors. Marching men, weary, hungry, with the rain coming down in torrents, stumbling under the weight of their arms and gear, with many long miles yet to go, do not like being ordered out of the way by a squadron of horse riding by and splashing mud over them. Many a bitter curse would be hurled after the horsemen as the files had to go over into the deep slush and muck by the side of the road. Of course the cavalry could not be expected to proceed at a foot pace, but the bitterness was there, in the hearts of the foot-soldiers. It is curious that both an officer in a marching regiment and a gunner officer note in their

memoirs that the British cavalryman did not take that loving care of his horse that one might have expected. According to them, the condition of the horses was inferior to that of the artillery, and of the cavalry of the King's German Legion.

Cavalry and infantry were administered by the Commander-in-Chief and the War Office, but Artillery and Engineers were under the Board of Ordnance. The gunners, horse and field, had in 1801 a strength of 13,000 men. A typical troop of horse artillery at Waterloo was made up of eighty gunners and eighty-four drivers, with officers and N.C.Os. There were actually 226 horses, though this troop had spares. The horses drew six guns and their limbers, five nine-pounders, and one five and a half inch howitzer, a heavy piece. To those accustomed to the prodigious number of shells fired per gun in a modern action it may seem a matter for wonder how the ammunition was supplied to the guns, but it must be remembered that the number of rounds actually used per gun was small indeed. The labour and time spent in ramming home the powder-cartridge and wads, the ramming of the shot, the laying, the priming, the application of the linstock, the sponging and cleaning was very great. The clumsy transport was usually adequate to cope with the amount of ammunition required. Case shot, and solid round shot, often in sieges or against ships made red-hot, were the usual missiles. Men still speak of "rounds," though the shell is no longer spherical. Rockets were also fired, chiefly for moral effect. Round shrapnel shells, however, were much used in the Peninsular War. A Captain Warre, writing

in 1808, just after the battle of Vimiero, says: "Our Artillery, which was extremely well served, did great execution, particularly the new shells filled with musket balls invented by Major Shrapnel." The shells were thrown with precision, and the fuses cut with accuracy. The French fuses were often so long, that while the shell lay on the ground with the fuse hissing, it was possible to take cover before it burst. English shells were timed to burst almost immediately after impact, though of course premature bursts were not unknown. This spherical case shot, adopted in 1803, had what was for those days an enormous range, 800 to 1,000 or even 1,200 yards. After Vimiero in 1808, Wellington wrote that Shrapnel's shell was largely responsible for the defeat of the enemy, and he also declared that it was highly effective at Badajoz. Sir George Wood, the C.R.A. at Waterloo, averred that without this shell it was doubtful if the British could have retaken La Haye Sainte. Shrapnel never served under Wellington. In 1804 he was promoted Lieutenant-Colonel, and made Inspector of Artillery at Woolwich Arsenal. It is curious to note that an officer, writing at the time of the battle of Fuentes d'Onoro, could say, "it is a well-known fact that one great use of artillery is to keep up the spirits of the soldiers by its noise."

The officers of the Royal Engineers, trained then as now at Woolwich, were as a corps still in their infancy. At first it was an officers' corps. The regular corps of Sappers and Miners did not reach the Peninsula till 1813. Wellington thought that the losses at Badajoz were largely due to the lack of trained sappers, and wrote home to that effect. The Royal

Sappers and Miners were thereupon formed and trained, but they could not arrive in time for the siege of Burgos. Officers and soldiers were slack in digging trenches. Any one who served in the infantry during the war of 1914-1918 will know how the British troops hated digging. The best trenches they ever held were those captured from the Germans. At Badajoz there was incessant rain. The trenches were two feet deep in liquid mud, with which it was impossible to make parapets.

In modern warfare, night is the Engineer's friend. Much of his work is done under cover of darkness. At this period, however, work on a moonless night was beset with difficulties. The only possible light was an oil lamp or candle lantern, "the lantern dimly burning." There were, of course, no electric torches, nor even safety matches, nor luminous watches. In the absence of a lantern, one had to strike flint and steel and ignite some tinder to see the time, to read a map, or consult a compass. Night operations were thus made difficult and hazardous, but on the other hand, there was little shooting at night. Ranges were so short that there was no firing at back areas, at rations or ammunition coming up, or Engineers' material. Both sides sometimes used fireballs, the equivalent of the Very lights of the last war, in order to show up the enemy on their immediate front.

The Staff College was founded by that energetic and enlightened Commander-in-Chief, the Duke of York, in 1799. The Duke was certainly not conspicuous as a leader in the field, but as an administrator he had talent. Incidentally he introduced slight differences

of uniform for general and staff officers, like the "red tabs" of to-day. The commander of an army now has his headquarters in some great house many miles from the scene of action. His responsibility remains enormous, but he has less distractions. Wellington's battle headquarters were on the field itself, perhaps in full view of the enemy, often in the hottest fire. If a battle lasted more than a day, as at Talavera, the Commander-in-Chief would sleep on the field, on the ground, wrapt in his cloak. The whole action was under his personal direction. He had no map with little flags. He would have to carry in his mind the changing dispositions of his troops. Instead of the telephone he had perhaps fifteen or twenty trained young aides-de-camp, mounted on fleet horses, whom he could send to his corps, divisional or brigade commanders with orders. When he was not giving battle he and his staff would be comfortably housed, but it was neither necessary nor desirable that he should be very far away. During the Peninsular War, Wellington trained an extremely efficient staff. His chief officers were the Quartermaster-General, the Adjutant-General and the Military Secretary, a junior post. The work of his Intelligence officers was excellent. At Waterloo, on the other hand, he had a scratch team. When he had his own picked men, they were a cheery, happy family together, on good terms with one another and with him.

Though there were no telephones, there was sometimes in use a Divisional Telegraph. This was a kind of semaphore, more often than not quite useless because invisible in the rolling clouds of smoke.



It was a system of discs and shutters in a framework, and was first used by the French in 1794 as a means of communication between Paris and the frontier armies. After Waterloo two arms were substituted. The expression "the fog of war" was particularly apt when applied to the smoke-wrapt battles of those days. It was not only the smoke that puzzled a commander. Without aeroplanes or balloons it was extremely difficult to know what "the fellow on the other side of the hill" was doing. Wellington endeavoured to deny all knowledge to the enemy of what was happening on his side of the hill. In this he was remarkably successful.

Battles in Wellington's day were sudden, short, fierce and bloody, with a never-ending rattle of musketry and drifts of choking smoke. They were not protracted for weeks nor spread over vast tracts of country. A battlefield of the Great War was gruesome enough, but that of a century earlier must have been worse, for the carnage was concentrated. White-faced bodies lay in heaps, sprawled out one upon another, their bright uniforms all muddied. So numerous were the dead that it was not always possible to bury them. They had to be piled in great heaps mingled with faggots and burnt.

The women of Britain (and Ireland) behaved as they have always done in war. They masked their tears and fears with a smile. Little news would come through to relieve their anxiety. Perhaps for weeks they would hear nothing. Then would come rumour of a great battle, and after more dreadful waiting, a ship would arrive with letters and despatches and lists

of casualties. Some of the men took their wives with them on active service. It was considered a rare privilege to be allowed to do so, a privilege only granted to about five men in each company. These amazing women, sometimes with young children, accompanied their husbands on all the long weary marches, shared their tents and bivouacs, and if their men were missing at the roll-call, ranged about the grim battlefield to look for them. Officers left their wives behind as a rule, though there were cases of officers' wives living at the base, or following the fortune of war. The French generals were frequently accompanied by mistresses, but there appears to have been no trouble of this sort in the higher command of the British Army. Instances were not unknown of Spanish girls living with British officers of lower rank following the troops, but it does not appear to have been a common occurrence. At least one young officer married a Spaniard, and took her with him.

Mrs. Dalbiac, wife of the Colonel of the 4th Dragoons, kept up with the army. She always slept in his tent, and in 1811 she spent two nights in the open in a ceaseless downpour of rain, with nothing but a blanket to cover her. At nightfall after Salamanca in the following year, torn with anxiety for her husband, she set out to look for him on the battlefield among the dead and wounded. "I cannot conceive a more unpleasant situation for a woman to be in, especially at night," remarks the narrator and witness. Yet another instance. Tortured by a long separation from her husband, Mrs. Prescott, the wife of an infantry major, determined to join him, and went out

to the Peninsula. Fearing lest she should be turned back if she went up the lines as a woman, she cut off her pretty ringlets and put on soldier's uniform. She too came to the field of Salamanca, and found her man, dead.

In the Great War of 1914-1918, leave home from France was a greatly-prized privilege available occasionally to all ranks. In the Peninsular War, transport conditions alone made this impossible. When in winter quarters, however, and in such periods of inaction, leave was taken by those high-placed officers who had money and influence behind them. During the time spent within the Lines of Torres Vedras the absence on leave of many general officers was a source of embarrassment to Wellington. He complained about it, and in March, 1811, he wrote to the Prime Minister:

"I assure you that the departure of the General Officers from the Army was as much against my inclination, as their arrival in England was injurious to the public interest. I did everything in my power to prevail upon them not to go, but in vain, and I acknowledge that it has given me satisfaction to find that they have been roughly handled in the newspapers. The consequence of the absence of some of them has been, that in the late operations I have been obliged to be General of Cavalry, and of the Advanced Guard, and the leader of two or three columns, sometimes on the same day."

Extra work was thrown upon his shoulders and upon his diminished staff. Moreover, in the early days such officers were not always to be trusted. Some of them were what Wellington called "croakers." They

were too prone to criticise freely the direction of the war, and the workings of the High Command. The effect of such a stream of criticism coming from the front was to spread alarm and disquiet at home, and to add to the Commander's difficulties. Wellington had to threaten to send home the offenders. As he said: "Croaking in the Army is highly injurious to the public service."

For the officers stationed in or visiting London the metropolis did not offer very many attractions. There were no Service clubs. Officers met at taverns, or at the coffee houses. Old Slaughter's Coffee House was a favourite rendezvous, and there were others. It was not until 1815 that Lord Lynedoch, better known as Sir Thomas Graham, one of Wellington's trusted officers, proposed to establish with Wellington's approval a military club in London. The object was to give officers, so said Lord Lynedoch, "a place of meeting where they can enjoy social intercourse combined with economy, and cultivate old acquaintance found on service. . . . Officers coming to town for a short period were driven into expensive and bad taverns and coffee houses, without a chance of meeting their friends or any good society." Curiously enough, there was great opposition to the scheme. The Government thought or feared it would be political and subversive of discipline. Lynedoch had to fight for his project, and it took a long time to overcome hostility. In the end it was decided to extend the privileges of the club to officers of the Royal Navy, and in 1817 the foundation stone of the United Services Club was laid in Waterloo Place.

Contrary to the custom in Continental armies, the British officer, as is well known, always wears plain clothes when off duty, a habit that has lately spread to lower ranks. Wellington is said to have been partly responsible in the first instance for this practice. Certainly he did not like display in uniform. He himself always wore in the field a plain blue or grey frock coat with no decorations, and he allowed his officers to wear anything they liked. Picton frequently wore an old top hat. Uniform was hated, for it was always changing and was very expensive. It was tight, heavy, and ornate. It was entirely unsuitable for campaigning, or even for wet weather at home. To be caught in a shower of rain in uniform might mean pounds out of pocket to the luckless officer.

The London of 1810 was the London of *Vanity Fair*, before Charles Dickens had begun to write. In that year Mr. Pickwick was youngish and discreetly frisky, Sam Weller a squalling precocious infant. Tony Weller was in his prime. Caped and gaitered he drove the Portsmouth mail, as yet untroubled by "widders." The squalor of the early industrialism was beginning to deface England. The slums and rookeries behind the decent façade of Georgian London were infamous. Steamboats were already being contemptuously dismissed in the taverns and coffee houses, but the imminence of the railway was hardly realised. Few believed that anything could be faster or more sure than a good horse. In London the horse splashed foul mud over the citizens as they took their walks abroad. The ring of iron-shod hooves on the

big cobbles and the clatter of wheels with iron tyres made with the shouts of the drivers a more nerve-racking din than the dull roar of the vast traffic of to-day. At night there was the occasional flickering lamplight, and the dim shops that men thought glaring.

The mail coaches on the principal roads were being speeded up, to use the phrase of to-day. The result was that accidents were not infrequent. Captain Warre, travelling to Portsmouth by the mail to join his regiment overseas, was upset with all his baggage in the pouring rain about half a mile short of Kingston. When he reached Portsmouth he had a weary wait for a wind. The transports bound for the Tagus, often crank and leaky, frequently made a long voyage of it, taking several weeks, with food for the troops running short. Glad indeed were officers and men when their white sails bore them to the blue winding waters of the river.

## II

### *Regimental Officers*

WELLINGTON'S regimental officers, English, Scottish, Irish, and Welsh, improved steadily in quality as their Chief's campaigns proceeded, and as the Army itself grew in moral and discipline. These clean-shaven young men, with their short side-whiskers, huge epaulettes, high stocks and collars, were largely sportsmen and gamblers, and very touchy about their honour. Most of them, especially at first, were hard drinkers. Heavy drinking was responsible for much indiscipline and neglect of duty. Unfortunately it was a fashionable vice. Ministers in Parliament were frequently drunk on the Front Bench. There was no effective check on this state of affairs by the Opposition, because the Opposition was quite as bad. On the other hand there was a number of young officers with not too much money who had careers to make, and who industriously learned Hindustani, Spanish or Portuguese. They took their profession seriously, worked hard at it, and saved their pay in order to buy their promotion. The flame of patriotism was burning high in young England. "Boney" was looked upon as the arch tyrant, to be resisted at all costs. There was yet another type of regimental officer, he who went gaily through the war as if it were a game, jesting, reckless, knowing little or

nothing of tactics, but brave, resolute, ready and willing to bear great hardships and to take all things as they came. Captain (afterwards Sir John) Kincaid of the 95th, who has left behind him an account of his adventures, was this sort of officer. Captain Peter O'Hare was another good type of fighting soldier. He was in the same regiment, the 95th, from its inception. He had fought at Monte Video, been wounded at Buenos Aires, and went through all the principal battles in the Peninsula, to the taking of Ciudad Rodrigo. As a major he led the "forlorn hope" at the subsequent storming of Badajoz. He took two or three musket balls in his breast and fell dead upon the breach. Simmons, who tells of his gallant end, says that they shook hands before the assault, and O'Hare remarked with a laugh, "A lieutenant-colonel or cold meat in a few hours."

A hundred years ago eccentrics were more numerous than they are to-day. Such a one was Sir John Downie, a Scot, "one of those extraordinary characters who really seem to like fighting," as Colonel Frazer, R.H.A., said of him. Downie was slightly wounded in a minor action and taken prisoner. He made himself a thorough nuisance, and was taken before General Villatte, who loaded him with abuse and ordered him to be tied to a gun. After his exchange and his return to the army he kept on writing to Villatte, demanding an apology or a duel. He went to the outposts with a letter of challenge, inviting Villatte to meet him between the advanced sentries of the armies, or as would be said nowadays, in No Man's Land. He was born two hundred years too late.



Captain Colquhoun Grant, of the 42nd, the Black Watch, was one of Wellington's admirable intelligence officers, a celebrated scout. A Highlander, he came from the wooded hills that stand along Strathspey. He was a mountaineer, a dead shot, a swordsman, and a gallant, strong and handsome figure. So daring was he that when behind the enemy's lines in the Peninsula, he wore his Highland uniform, with bonnet, tartan and epaulettes, so that if taken, he would not be shot or hanged as a spy. It was Grant who supplied the indispensable information to Wellington in 1812, when the latter crossed the Tagus and out-manœuvred and out-marched Marmont. Wellington sent Grant behind the enemy's lines to discover whether Marmont intended to attack Ciudad Rodrigo. Off went Grant, in uniform, riding hard, and slipping by the picquets and outposts of the French, until he came to a mountain overlooking the plain of Salamanca. The February night was falling fast, and plunging the magnificent prospect of spires and towers and river and hills into gloom. Tired with his long ride, he lay, with his claymore by his side, beneath an olive tree, with his head in the lap of Juana de Leon, a Spanish girl whose lover he was. She, with her brother Domingo, followed his fortunes, watched over him, kept him from discovery and harm, and supplied him with information. The tide of war had swept over their town. They were friendless, homeless, and ready for any desperate deed. They had taken to the mountains, and Domingo shot at sight any wandering straggler of the French.

As Grant lay sleeping, Domingo approached. Grant

was awake in a moment, eager for news. And news there was. Domingo had seen scaling ladders and ball ammunition being sent to Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida. Grant hastily wrote a note. Domingo whistled. There was an answering call. Manrico el Barbado, the bearded one, a gucrilla, sprang out of the rocks and saluted Grant, who was known and loved by all those wild hillmen. Manrico hid the note beneath his beard, swore he would reach Wellington with it, and vanished. Domingo said that Grant had been seen. Guards and sentries were on the alert everywhere. There was only one chance of getting through, at the ford of Huerta, on the Tormes, six miles below Salamanca. With Juana on Grant's horse, the two men strode on through the darkness. At Huerta, Domingo crept forward. He returned with the news that Huerta was full of French, and that vedettes were posted meeting at the ford as they patrolled. Grant kissed the girl and said good-bye. He chose a moment when the sentries were at the far end of their beats, and with his horse splashed into the water. *Ping, ping*, went the bullets of the sentries. In three bounds Grant's horse was clear of the river. There was a scurry and a pursuit, but Grant found a friendly wood of cork oak, where Domingo, dressed as a peasant, passed unsuspected through the French lines and joined him. They lay there for a few days till one morning the two reached the brow of a hill. From here they could see Marmont's troops on the march, with beat of drum, colours flying, arms and eagles flashing in the sun. Grant made a careful note of every regiment and gun. He sent another

message by el Barbado to Wellington, with the news that the scaling ladders had been a blind, and that no attack on Rodrigo was intended. Grant then determined to find out the ultimate destination of Marmont. A few days later, with his two Spanish friends, he hid in a cork-oak forest near a pass which Marmont must traverse. Here they were surprised by a party of French light infantry. Manrico was clubbed senseless. After a desperate fight with claymore and pistols, Grant and Domingo mounted and galloped away, but they were chased and cut off. Domingo was killed. Grant gave up his sword to a French officer, a prisoner at last.

He was brought to Marmont's quarters. Marmont invited him to dinner, and told him that the French Intelligence knew all his companions, even Juana, at which Grant's heart sank. Marmont put him on parole, that he should not *consent* to be released by any guerilla band during his journey to France as a prisoner. On the first night of his journey, Grant and the French officer of his escort bivouacked under a tree, but could not sleep. They moved away from the tree. In the morning they found that it bore grim fruit. A bearded man swung to and fro, the rope creaking on the branch, and beside him hung a girl, her long hair stirred by the dawn wind. With a gasp of horror Grant recognised Manrico—and Juana de Leon.

As he neared the French frontier he tore open the sealed letter given to him by Marmont for the Governor of Bayonne. In this he found himself described as a dangerous spy to be sent in chains to

Paris. "Oho," said Grant, "this more than releases me from my parole." He destroyed the letter. On reaching Bayonne he gave his escort the slip, sold his Highland kit to a Portuguese Jew, bought the undress uniform of a French officer, and sat himself down at a table in the best hotel. Here he ordered a meal. To a French general officer whom he met there in the dining-room he announced himself as Captain O'Reilly of a disbanded battalion of the Irish brigade in the French service. Grant persuaded the general to let him join his party for Paris, where in due course he arrived, and was actually presented to the Emperor Napoleon himself, as Captain O'Reilly. After this episode he thought it was time for Captain O'Reilly to disappear, so he donned a workman's blouse, and dropped a bundle containing his uniform into the Seine. He visited the British secret agent in Paris, procured some money and a false passport, and made for the coast near Nantes. He tried to get away in an American vessel bound for Boston, but the ship met with an accident, and had to put back to port. Disguised as an American sailor looking for a ship, he went ashore. The first thing he saw was a notice enjoining all men to seize or kill Colquhoun Grant, the notorious spy, travelling with a false passport. He dared not go back to the American ship. At length, after many more adventures, a British cruiser appeared off the coast, H.M. Frigate *Laurel*, 36 guns. Somehow or other Grant procured a boat, rowed out to her, and clambered safe aboard. Four months from the date on which he was first taken prisoner, he was behind Marmont's lines once more in Spain. As lieutenant-colonel he was

chief of the Intelligence Department in the Waterloo campaign.

Another officer whom Wellington employed in Intelligence work, particularly in scouting and reconnaissance, was Captain Somers Cocks, of the 16th Light Dragoons. He was a very Bayard. His conspicuous gallantry and daring, his care and love for his men, love that was returned in full, his gaiety, resource, and high spirits, marked him as one of Wellington's most promising young officers. He obtained his majority in the 79th Foot, the Cameron Highlanders, and fell leading his men in the breach at Burgos. Wellington himself, four of his generals and their staffs, with the officers of the 16th Dragoons and the 79th Regiment, gave him burial in a soldier's grave.

The exploit of another junior officer, one among very many, deserves notice. On the 5th May, 1811, at Fuentes d'Onoro, Captain Norman Ramsay's troop of horse artillery was cut off and surrounded by a mass of French cavalry. It seemed as if they were utterly lost. But a great commotion arose among the enemy horsemen. A rush was made to one spot. Sabres sparkled, pistols flashed. Suddenly, in a great cloud of dust, the French squadrons opened, and Ramsay burst through at the head of his troop, galloping at full stretch, the guns bounding along, while the swords of the mounted gunners rose and fell.

Ramsay drove two 6-pounders over a hedge and ditch at Vitoria to get his guns into action against the retreating enemy. His head was taken off by a round shot at Waterloo.

Something has already been said of the medical branch and the commissariat officers. There remains the chaplains' department. There were no regimental chaplains, but some of the divisions had a parson on their strength. Chaplains appear to have been generally little respected. They are seldom mentioned in the numerous memoirs and war diaries that have survived, and then disparagingly. The Light Division in the Peninsula had a chaplain named Parker, "whose outward man conveyed no very exalted notion of the respectability of his profession." He distinguished himself by stealing away from a bivouac to sleep more comfortably in a neighbouring house. He awoke to find the division gone, and a French dragoon marching into his room. The poor man was robbed of everything he possessed. His captors found him entirely ignorant of military matters, or perhaps very properly reticent on the subject, and considering that he was not worth his rations as a prisoner, sent him ignominiously back to his cure, stripped almost naked and in a woeful state. It is easy to understand the somewhat contemptuous manner in which the padres were treated when one considers the torpor and slackness into which the Church at home had fallen at this period in its history. Colonel Frazer, however, does mention an excellent sermon from a Mr. Driscoll, and the Reverend Charles Frith, a big strong man, carried three or four wounded officers one by one down a rugged mountain side during a battle in the Pyrenees.

The Methodist revival had its representatives in the ranks. Wellington did not altogether like the

little prayer meetings that were occasionally held by the men. Before the end of the war he reorganised the official Church of England chaplains' department. Thenceforward regular church parades were held.

During the Peninsular campaigns Wellington brought the army to such a high state of efficiency that it is not surprising to find that the relations between the regimental officers and their men were usually good. A rifleman of the 95th spoke thus of his officers:

"The officers are commented on and closely observed. The men are very proud of those who are brave in the field, and kind and considerate to the soldiers under them. An act of kindness done by an officer has often during the battle been the cause of his life being saved. Nay, whatever folks may say upon the matter, I know from experience that in our army the men like best to be officered by gentlemen, men whose education has rendered them more kind in manners than your coarse officer, sprung from obscure origin, and whose style is brutal and overbearing."

The same holds good even in these democratic days. The same man, Rifleman Harris, says of his commanding officer at Vimieiro, Major Travers:

"He was a tight hand, but a soldier likes that better than a slovenly officer; and indeed, he was deservedly beloved by all who knew him."

Major Travers rode about the battlefield of Vimieiro apparently in the highest spirits, as if he were following a good pack of hounds. His gaiety was infectious, and the men were heartened. He was lean and hatchet-

faced, no handsome ladies' man, but to quote Harris again, "a regular good 'un, a real English soldier." None of the men knew that he was as bald as a coot, but somehow in the heat of the action his hat was knocked off and lost, and with it his wig. After firing had ceased, he rode up and down the line, his bald pate shining, shouting, "A guinea to any man that will find my wig!" The men, weary, thirsty, smoke-blackened, with their dead and wounded lying all around, burst into shouts of laughter, and cheered him as he rode.

It may be noticed here, as a point of interest, that the modern phrase, "to tell off" a man, meaning to rebuke, had its equivalent in the army of that day. An officer writes: "I was this morning obliged to *turn off* some of our men for drunkenness."

Even as early as 1808, before the army was a perfected machine, the regimental officers were not unmindful of their men. While waiting at Cork to embark for the Peninsula, they organised a ball in a storehouse in aid of the men's wives and children. It rained, and they netted only £50, little enough, as one of them remarked.

The relations with their enemy, the French, were amicable, when the two forces were not actively engaged in killing each other. There was little hate or frightfulness in this war, save between the French and the native populations. Outposts frequently fraternised. Shortly before the battle of the Nivelle, it became almost impossible for the British to purchase good wine. An officer on outpost gave to a French officer engaged on the same duty some money to buy



wine for the use of the mess. Within three days a case arrived, consigned to the Englishman. Much bowing and thanks and politeness ensued. During an earlier period of the war an English officer wrote:

"Our picquet post at the bridge became a regular lounge for the winter for all manner of folks. I used to be much amused at seeing our naval officers come up from Lisbon, riding on mules, with huge ship's spy glasses, like six-pounders, strapped across the backs of their saddles. Their first question invariably was, 'Who is that fellow there?' (pointing to the enemy's sentry close to us), and, on being told that he was a Frenchman, 'Why the devil don't you shoot him?'"

The Navy was more realistic than the Army. Writing in 1810, Major Napier (afterwards General Sir Charles Napier) reveals an attitude of mind very different to that of us more savage moderns. He says:

"Marshal Ney is supposed to have passed the ford where my brother's picquet was, and the men fired at him without George's orders, wounding one person of his suite. Had Ney been hit it would not have been creditable; it is not right to fire at people without necessity, like Indian savages. The Marshal, or whoever it was, had rode up the river and crossed safely, so no end was answered by pelting him as he was going home."

An example of forbearance was shown by that cool and gallant officer, Colonel Sydney Beckwith. A young French prisoner, taken but not yet disarmed, fired point-blank in the Colonel's face, the ball going through

the peak of his cap and grazing the top of his head. A soldier was just going to blow out the Frenchman's brains when Beckwith stopped him, saying, "Let the boy alone. Knock the thing out of his hand, and give him a kick on the bottom and send him to the rear." The next morning the boy was given a good breakfast in the Colonel's billet. When asked what he meant by his action, he said that he was so alarmed that he did not know his finger was on the trigger.

With the civil population in Spain and Portugal relations were sometimes good, sometimes strained. There were, of course, faults on both sides. Discipline went to pieces at the sack of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, and the regimental officers seem to have been powerless. In Madrid, however, the troops were welcomed as deliverers. Generally speaking, the officers got along very well with the Spaniards of the upper classes, but the peasantry were apt to be suspicious and sullen. Often they refused to sell their produce and drove off their cattle. One is bound to sympathise with them. To a peasant farmer soldiers, no matter on whose side they may be, are always a nuisance and an interference with his normal way of living.

Monasteries and convents abounded in Spain and Portugal. Wellington as a rule refused to allow the religious houses to be occupied by troops, but a favourite occupation of officers behind the lines was to go in and have a bottle or two of wine with the jolly easy-going friars. Or for a change, they would carry on a flirtation, through the grating, with the nuns, who often presented them with sweetmeats and

fruits. Captain Kincaid, whose company mess was sick of eating meat without bread, set out at dawn one morning to look for some. On reaching a village he found a party of nuns, who were waiting outside the village bakery for some maize bread they had baking therein. Kincaid explained his pressing needs. Two of the nuns then volunteered to give him their shares. Kincaid rewarded them with a kiss and a dollar apiece. They resented neither of these attentions, so he said.

There was naturally from time to time a little trouble with the high spirits of the younger men. For instance, Wellington had to forbid officers going on to the stage at theatres in Lisbon and ragging the players. At first in the Peninsula there was discontent with the orders of the Commander-in-Chief. Though confidence in Wellington was expressed at quite an early date by the more sober elements in the Army, it was some time before he commanded universal obedience. There were frequent cases of insubordination, and, as has been said, many pessimistic letters were written home during periods of inaction, such as that which followed the battle of Talavera.

As always, there was a certain amount of grumbling on the part of the regimental officers against the Staff. Much of it was ill-informed and unfair, though from time to time it was not unjustified. In spite of the establishment of the Staff College, appointments were still largely the result of influence and favour. Wellington gradually weeded out the inefficient, and built up for himself in the Peninsula an excellent staff, which he greatly missed in the

short campaign of Waterloo. An example of thoroughly bad staff work was the disembarkation of troops at Ostend for Waterloo. A regiment of Light Dragoons arrived in a transport, and the horses were got ashore by the simple method of taking them from the warm hold, and sending them overboard with a splash into the cold sea. They were hauled ashore with ropes.

Into the midst of all this hubbub and shouting another transport arrived with a troop of horse artillery. No sooner had she grounded on the sands, when a naval officer came aboard with a gang of sailors, who proceeded to fling the artillery horses overboard in like manner, in spite of the indignant protests of the gunner officer. "Can't help it, sir," said the Navy, "the Duke's orders are that there is to be no delay in turning round the ship." Bundles of harness went overside also. At the ebb tide naked men plunged into the water to recover their gear. The same thing occurred as other transports arrived. The noise and confusion was appalling. When men, horses and equipment were at last all safely ashore no one knew what to do next. Night came, with rain and wind. Not a single staff officer appeared. The A.Q.M.G. kept out of sight altogether. The gunner officer set off to try to find billets. He discovered some sheds inland, but had the greatest difficulty in bringing to the place his soaked and hungry men, his dripping harness, and his shivering horses through the inky darkness. The rain splashed down mercilessly and the mud made them slip and slide. By eleven o'clock next morning they were ready to march with

their guns, but rations were not issued till 3 p.m. The men were plastered with mud, the horses cold and dispirited. The commandant of the fort was discovered after a long and vexatious search, but the only orders he had were that every unit was to march straightway to Ghent. They obeyed. Mishaps of this sort occur in all wars. Even the most brilliant staff work breaks down sometimes, and on this occasion the staff had been hastily improvised.

Much of the "croaking" was due to ignorance. No regimental officer can possibly know anything beyond his immediate duty. A London newspaper was ardently longed for in the Peninsula, and was far more precious than those in coffee-houses at home. The men on the spot learned from the newspapers how the war was going. There was no official bulletin issued to the troops, as there was in the recent European war. Even in that struggle newspapers were eagerly bought when possible, though they were no more trustworthy than the official news, which nobody in the war zone believed. Indeed, the bulletin from G.H.Q. was derisively known as "Comic Cuts."

The uniform and equipment of the regimental officer, though of course varying with the corps or branch of the service, had in common the uncomfortable high stock and collar, and the enormous epaulettes. Every commissioned officer wore a crimson sash round his waist. Line regiments wore red coats, white cross-belts, blue-grey trousers, wide at the bottoms like sailors', and shoes. Leather gaiters were often worn to prevent the shoes from slipping off in mud, and to ensure that sand and gravel were kept out of

the shoes. In the haversack the clasp-knife, fork and spoon would be carried, also a tin mug for wine, soup and tea. The officers of the Rifle Brigade (95th) wore a shako, with plume, green jacket and trousers. Dragoons wore red coats and tall busbies, Hussars blue pelisses and dolmans, with white breeches; horse artillery, blue coats, white breeches and busbies with a white cockade or plume. An officer of the Foot Guards would wear a cocked hat with his red coat, white cross-belt and breeches. The 42nd, 79th and other Highland kilted regiments had the red coat, feather bonnet and tartan.

A few weeks' hard campaigning reduced all this expensive finery to rags. Though spare shoes<sup>1</sup> were carried, the long marches endured by the infantry wiped off the soles, and officers and men were not infrequently "on their uppers." Blankets were carried for their bivouacs, and an old campaigner would stitch two together to form a sleeping bag. An infantry officer did not carry all his belongings on his back. His kit was probably in two portmanteaux, slung across the back of a mule or pack-horse, the one balancing the other. In them would be a regimental jacket, various waistcoats, white, coloured and flannel, two pairs of grey trousers, a few changes of flannel drawers, perhaps half a dozen pairs of worsted socks, and as many of cotton. Then there probably would be six shirts, some cravats, a fitted dressing-case, an undress pelisse, three pairs of boots, two pairs of shoes, pocket handkerchiefs, and odds and ends of all sorts. He would bring with him from home a

<sup>1</sup> Known as shoes, in reality short boots.

supply of cash, £20 or so, maybe. If he could, he bought a donkey or a mule to carry his kit, though on forced marches the baggage could not always keep up with the troops. Frequently a junior infantry officer acquired a pony, and rode at the head of his men. If he was wounded, not too severely, the pony might prove to be the best means of transport to the rear. It would probably be a painful ride, but the bullock cart was an agony. The officer's servant accompanied his wounded master back from the line, found him a billet at the base, and made him as comfortable as possible. The batmen were in charge of the baggage animals. Regimental carts were not allowed to be used for officers' individual kits; Wellington on one occasion found a major using a regimental cart to bring up his baggage from the base, and dealt with him severely.

The expenses of an officer on active service were considerable. Besides his mess bills, he often had to pay for his billet, and always for his transport and horses. Pay was therefore a matter of considerable importance. At the time of the Peninsular War a lieutenant-colonel of the infantry drew 15/11 per day, a major 14/1, a captain 9/5, a lieutenant 5/8, and an ensign 4/8. Equivalent ranks in the cavalry drew on an average 5/- a day more.

Promotion by the routine of the service was very slow, even in war time. There were two other methods by which promotion to field rank could be obtained, influence and purchase. Aides-de-camp were not unnaturally chosen by general officers through relationship, family connections or friends. A member of Parliament, anxious to do something for a valued

constituent, might procure a company for that gentleman's son. In 1793 the Government had thought of a grand plan to raise fresh troops. A bounty of £10, with £5 levy money, would be paid to each recruit, and the cost thereof defrayed by the sale of commissions. Thus ten companies of 60 men each would cost £9,000, and the proceeds of the sale of one lieutenant-colonelcy, one majority, one captaincy, one lieutenantcy, and one ensign's commission would amount to £9,250, a clear profit. The result was that numbers of most unsuitable young men obtained commissions or promotions, men with neither breeding nor education, but merely with wealth, perhaps ill-gotten. Poor officers had the constant mortification of being passed over for promotion, even after long service in the field.

An example of how the system worked is found in the case of Lieutenant Tomkinson of the 16th Light Dragoons on active service in 1812. He wished for a captaincy in that regiment. This was effected by gazetting him to a captaincy in a foot regiment and then exchanging. The transaction seems complicated, but perhaps it was the cheapest way of doing it. The following letter to his father shows how expensive a career in the Army could be.

"9 Lower Grosvenor Street,  
19th March, 1812.

"SIR,—I am happy to inform you that your son is gazetted to a company in the 60th Foot, for which he has paid £1,500. The difference to be paid for his exchange to Cavalry is £1,650. Your son will have his



lieutenancy and cornetcy to sell, amounting to £997 10s. It will be necessary for you to lodge the £1,365 which, added to the £285 now in Collyer's hands, will make the regulated difference of £1,650. I have desired Messrs. Collyers to send you the necessary papers for the exchange for your signature on behalf of your son.

I remain, Sir, yours faithfully,

G. ANSON,

Colonel, 16th Light Dragoons."

The scandal of purchase lasted for many years.

Something was done to improve this state of affairs. The Royal Military College, and the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, were founded by the Commander-in-Chief, the Duke of York. Thus education as well as money became a way of entrance to the profession of arms. Not for nothing does the figure of the Duke of York stand at the top of his column in Waterloo Place. Between 1795 and 1802 he took a number of undisciplined units, full of the wrong type of officers and men, and made them into something like an army. Wellington in the field completed his work.

To the Duke of York belongs the credit of recognising the excellent work of Major Le Marchant, who as a cavalry brigadier fell at Salamanca. This officer had served with the Austrians and Prussians during the early French Revolutionary wars. As the result of his experience, he had come to realise how inferior was the British cavalry in the use of their sabres. His *Treatise on the Sword Exercise* was taken up

by the Duke, and became part of Field Service Regulations.

It was Le Marchant who suggested to the Duke the need for a military college for cavalry and infantry. He drew up a detailed scheme, which the Duke persuaded the Government to accept. The military college was first opened at High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire in 1799. Some years later it was removed to Sandhurst, where it has flourished ever since. Until Le Marchant joined the Peninsular Army in 1811, he was the Lieutenant-Governor, the real head of the college. In the early days it was far too small for the size of the army. The Senior Division of this institution was the forerunner of the Staff College of later years.

It is time to return to the life of the troops and their officers on service. Billeting was carried out in a similar manner to the practice to-day. The Quarter-master-General of a division, with the brigade-majors and the regimental quartermasters, went on ahead of the troops. After setting aside certain houses for the General and his staff, the Q.M.G. divided the town between the majors of brigades. They in their turn provided for their brigadiers and their staffs, and apportioned the streets among the regimental quartermasters. Billets were allotted to the commanding officers and headquarters, and each company or squadron was given a number of houses. Therefore when the troops marched in there was no confusion. Sometimes the town was deserted, the inhabitants having fled with their keys. In such cases it is regrettable to have to record that a musket ball through the

keyhole was found to open every lock. There were other occasions when the townsfolk made the army welcome. Then the troops had good beds, good wine, and good food.

When engaged in the long marches which were a feature of Wellington's manoeuvres in the Peninsula, the troops commonly bivouacked in the open. This was all very well in good weather. A warm starlit night beside a camp fire was pleasant enough. But a greatcoat, or a blanket, or even two would not effectively keep out frost or rain. The British fighting man endures such wretchedness with good humour, and is always ready to laugh at his fellows and himself. An officer, lately joined and new to this open-air life, declared that it was impossible to sleep near the road along which a stream of horrible Portuguese carts with screaming ungreased axles were constantly moving. He therefore ensconced himself in a narrow ravine, sheltered from the wind, where his servant made him a little hut of boughs. Wrapped in his cloak, he was a perfect picture of felicity, with his shaving kit spread out on a napkin ready for the morning. That night at about twelve o'clock torrents of rain came down, with thunder and lightning. After five hours or so of misery, some one thought of going to look for the luxurious one. He was not to be found. He was eventually discovered, amid shouts of merriment, at the bottom of the hill, disconsolately looking for his missing gear. He had been half drowned by the sudden rushing water and had been floated out of his nest.

Joining one's regiment "up the line" was an

adventure in itself. Three or four officers would travel together and share the difficulties of transport, food and shelter. They would have to make their own arrangements for the journey, and travel by bullock wagon or on foot with a pony, mule or donkey to carry their baggage. They would obtain billets where and how they could, and acquire food by purchase or other means. Whether a fowl was killed accidentally by one's servant throwing stones at it, or whether it just happened to fall all ready plucked into the pot, nobody inquired. Most old campaigners have exercised a similar discretion.

It was usual, when in winter quarters and leading a more or less settled life, to have a regimental mess instead of the company or squadron messes customary in the field. The officers would give a ball once a week to the ladies of the village. These rustic Spanish beauties were dressed in short brown jackets and petticoats of coarse cloth, and nearly suffocated their hosts with their garlic-laden breath. In the big towns the society was less bucolic, and the women were magnificent in black satin.

Here is a sketch of a battalion headquarters mess before Waterloo. Kincaid the adjutant speaks. "We made a fire against the wall of Sir Andrew Barnard's cottage, and boiled a huge camp kettle full of tea, mixed up with a suitable quantity of milk and sugar, for breakfast; and, as it stood on the edge of the high road, where all the big-wigs of the army had occasion to pass, I believe almost every one of them, from the Duke downwards, claimed a cupful."

With a company mess or bivouac, all was well if the

rain held off and the light baggage and provisions came in on the heels of the regiment. If it were not too late in the day, the first thing to be done was to make some tea. In at least one division in 1813 each company mess had a Portuguese boy with a herd of goats in his charge, for fresh milk. The orderly officer remained in camp. The mess president would call on the regimental butcher, and buy a heart, some liver, or kidneys to supplement the ration. He would then go to the commissary, and cajole or persuade that officer into giving him a few extra biscuits, or possibly even a canteen of brandy. The other officers wandered around, and lost no opportunity of adding to the common stock. Dinner hour was always the hour at which dinner could be got ready. After dinner, perhaps, they would take their cups and mugs (and their skin of wine) to some neighbouring company mess, and drink and talk and smoke their pipes or cigars around the fire. Soon it would be time to creep into sleeping bags, and slumber till the bugles sounded at the dawning of another day.

### III

#### *Rank and File*

WELLINGTON'S commissioned officers were the instrument by which his work was done, but of what use are the bravest and most skilful officers without their private soldiers and non-commissioned ranks? Humorous or dour, blasphemous or sentimental, drunk or sober, ruthless or tender, hoping all things, enduring all things, they *are* the Army.

The indomitable marching infantry, the men who won the battles, carried their house and home on their backs. The weight was tremendous. In the knapsack were among other things three pairs of shoes, and an extra pair of soles and heels, spare socks and shirts, a greatcoat or a blanket. Strapped to the knapsack was a light tin camp kettle, one between six men, and carried in turn. Says a private soldier: "My own knapsack was my bitterest enemy. I felt it press me to the earth almost at times, and more than once felt I should die under its deadly embrace." In the haversack was a knife and other personal gear, and three days' rations. The daily ration of officer and man was normally 1 lb. beef, 1 lb biscuit, and a tot of rum or wine, but on the march or in battle "soldiers eat when they can." The water-bottle or "canteen" was filled, there was a hatchet and a bayonet, a musket, and eighty rounds of ball cartridge. The load was awkwardly

placed, and this counted for more than the actual weight, which was about sixty pounds. During a long march it became terribly oppressive. Yet the Light Division is said to have marched on one occasion fifty-two miles in twenty-four hours.<sup>1</sup>

The sufferings and hardships of the long marches were nobly and stoically borne. The men kept going to the very limit of their endurance. Of sore feet an officer writes: "I have often seen the blood soaking through the gaiters and over the heels of the soldiers' hard shoes, whitened with the dust." The rocky roads were cruel. Covered with dust and sweat, men would fall heavily on the naked rocks and stay there prone and helpless. Others, unable to drag one foot after the other, would lean despairingly on their firelocks, muttering that they had never fallen out before. The wounded often died upon the road in their efforts to get through to hospital. There was seldom enough transport for all. Many were therefore classed as "walking wounded" when already half dead. Simmons noted in a letter home that "soldiers are like children." Though they were often told that if their wounds were exposed the flies would lay their eggs upon them, they would take no notice. If there were no officer present to enforce this command, the wounds would soon be crawling with maggots. Nevertheless, in 1810, Simmons could write of his own crack regiment: "The men are so seasoned that rain or any other kind of weather makes no impression. We have been in want of tents for months together,

<sup>1</sup> According to Lieutenant Simmons, who took part in the march Professor Oman gives it as 43 miles in 26 hours, and Napier speaks of 62 miles in 26 hours. At the lowest estimate, it was a memorable march under active service conditions,

sleeping on the ground. *This is the regiment to make the soldiers."*

The British soldier had a hearty contempt for foreigners. He was keen to fight and beat the French, but there was no hate or animosity against his foe. The Frenchman was familiarly nicknamed Johnny Crapaud, or Johnny for short, just as a hundred years later the German soldier was known as Fritz or Jerry. In spite of all their hardships the English soldiers were light-hearted and full of rough wit. Their Scottish comrades were more silent, having their own private jokes. The Irish were as gay as they always are. There were many Irishmen in the 95th. At Sabugal a rifleman named Flynn had covered a Frenchman. His finger was on the trigger, when a hare leapt out of the fern in front of him. In a moment he shifted his aim and shot it. When the fight was over his officer asked him what he meant by wasting his ammunition. "Sure, your honour," replied Flynn, "we can shoot a Frenchman any day, but it isn't always I can bag a hare for your supper."

There was a very large number of Irishmen in the Peninsular Army. They were drafted from the militia to English and Scottish regiments as well as to their own. They were magnificent fighters but were a wild rough type of men, prone to insubordination, looting and drink. It was difficult to cure them of looting. On the retreat from Talavera a strict order against plundering the natives had been issued. The very next day Wellington, on one of his rides, saw a man of the 88th (Connaught Rangers) struggling along, with his greatcoat over his head, and a beehive on it.



Clouds of angry bees were buzzing round him. Furiously Wellington shouted, "Hallo, you there, where did you get that hive?" The muffled answer came from under the coat, "Just over the hill yonder, and bejusus, if ye don't make haste they'll all be gone." The Commander-in-Chief could not help laughing, and let the man go, but two men of the 53rd suffered a severe flogging a few days later for exactly the same offence.

The raw material, the recruits, from which this magnificent army was fashioned, was often very rough. Taken from the militia, from the slums of London, from the plough-tail or the shepherd's hut upon the downs, they were, in the early days before the discipline had left its mark upon them, extremely unruly. Rascals and criminals were also swept into the net. The recruits often deserted on their way to the front. The Irish militiamen usually joined up at the recruiting depot roaring drunk, and by the time the drink had died out of them they were ready for a religious riot among themselves. The valour that stormed the "imminent deadly breach" at Badajoz was marred by the brutality that raged among the drunken soldiers as they sacked the town, looting, ravishing, slaying. Soldiers at home, bored by the monotony of everlasting drill and hardened by a ferocious discipline, were wild to be sent to the front, as an escape. If there was to be no war for them, they would put lime in their eyes to induce ophthalmia and so get their discharge. This actually happened on a large scale in 1808.

Discipline, or rather punishment, was terribly

severe. Martial law caused many a man to dangle from a tree, for the deterrence of others. The floggings for theft or insubordination seem to-day incredibly savage. On the retreat to Vigo General Craufurd himself observed two men straying away from the ranks. He thundered out *Halt!* to the brigade, and with the French not far behind, ordered a drum-head court-martial at once. The men were sentenced to a hundred lashes apiece. A man in the ranks near the General growled out, "Damn his eyes! He had much better get us something to eat than badger us this way." Craufurd overheard. Instantly the man was court-martialled. His sentence was three hundred lashes. It was too dark to carry out the floggings then and there, and the column pressed on all night, Craufurd marching on foot with the rest. At dawn he ordered the brigade to form a square, and said:

"Although I shall obtain the goodwill neither of the officers nor the men by so doing, I am resolved to punish these three men according to the sentences awarded. Begin with Daniel Howans."

This was the man who had spoken. A slender ash tree was the only thing available to which he could be tied. "Don't trouble about tying me up," said Howans. "I'll take my punishment like a man." He took the whole three hundred without a murmur. When it was over, his wife, who had watched it all, stepped up and covered his bleeding back with his greatcoat. The colonel of the regiment strode forward and lowering the point of his sword, begged the general to forgive the other two, for they were good soldiers and had fought in all the battles of Portugal.

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"I order you, sir," said Craufurd, "to do your duty. The men shall be punished." The prisoners made ready. Craufurd walked up and down. Suddenly he turned round.

"Stop," he said. "Because of the intercession of your colonel, I will allow you this much. You shall draw lots and the winner shall escape. But one of the two I am determined to make an example of."

The sergeant-major picked up two stones. The man who drew the longest put on his knapsack again, while the other stripped. When the bugler wielding the lash had counted seventy-five, Craufurd said, "That will do. Rejoin your company. I give you all notice," he went on, "that I will halt the brigade again the very moment I see any man disobeying my orders, and try him by court-martial on the spot."

*No man but one formed of stuff like General Craufurd could have saved the brigade from perishing altogether; and if he flogged two, he saved hundreds from death.* These remarkable words were written by a private soldier in the ranks who witnessed these doings, and whose comrades suffered the penalty.

Three hundred lashes seems a terrible sentence, but Sergeant Mayberry, who was convicted of embezzlement of company funds and of the men's pay, was given seven hundred at Hythe. He was reduced to the ranks. So far from showing resentment he volunteered for the first draft for Portugal. He was determined to win back his rank, and fought with the utmost fury and heroism at Badajoz. He died in the breach.

The awful penalty of 1,000 lashes or even 1,200, which was the maximum allowed, was occasionally

given, and sometimes proved fatal. However, it was usual to have a medical officer present, and if he thought it was more than the man could stand, he could order the punishment to be suspended or remitted. Savage sentences were unnecessary and brutalised the men. Some officers realised this fact. Late in life Sir Harry Smith, once an officer in the Rifles, wrote:

"There are several officers under whom I have served whose example I have ever endeavoured to imitate. The most conspicuous of them are Sir Sydney Beckwith, Sir A. Barnard, and Sir J. Colborne. The leading principle by which these officers of distinction were actuated, was that of kindness to their soldiers, and an endeavour to maintain discipline by seeking out the meritorious to reward and commend rather than the guilty to punish."

Plundering did not stop short at the living. The dead of both sides received but little reverence. They were stripped and robbed. Wandering about the battlefield, Rifleman Harris tells how he came upon an officer of the 50th, lying dead. Thinking that his shoes were worth removing, as being better than his own, Harris began to pull them off. As he did so, a ball whistled by his head. Looking round, he saw a French light infantryman, doubtless also plundering, taking aim at him. Harris instantly fired and killed his man. He then proceeded to search the Frenchman in order to pouch the booty he had certainly gathered. As he was turning the body over, an officer of the 60th approached.

"What, looking for money, my lad?" said he.

"I am, sir," replied Harris, "but I can't find out where the fellow has hidden it."

"You deserve something, my man, for a good shot. Here," he said, stooping down, "This is the place. Rip up the lining of his coat, and look in his stock."

"Thank you, sir," said Harris, saluting. He tore open the lining with his sword-bayonet, and found a purse of gold and silver. Just then the bugle sounded the Fall In, and he rejoined the ranks.

Discipline became stricter later on. An officer, who was a great dandy, though a gallant fighter, was killed in one of the Pyrenees engagements. He wore a valuable diamond ring, and a marauding private, who could not get it off, pulled out his knife and cut off the ring-finger. The soldier offered the ring for sale among the officers. Inquiries were made, and the manner in which he came by it was discovered. He was tried by court-martial and received five hundred lashes.

Sir Walter Scott, coming upon some Scottish soldiers bivouacked at Peronne after the battle of Waterloo, inquired "if the Duke of Wellington took severe means of enforcing on his army that regard for the lives and property of the inhabitants, in maintaining which he evidently placed the pride of his ambition, not less than in beating his armed adversaries?" To this somewhat ponderous question the reply was:

"Na, sir, no' here, for the men ken him weel eneuch now. But in Spain we often had ugly jobs. He hung fifteen men on ae day there, after he had been ordering aboot it God knows how lang. And damn me if he didna ance gar the provost-marshal flog mair than a

dizzen of the women, for the women thought themselves safe, and so were waur than the men. They got sax and thirty lashes apiece on the bare doup, and it was lang before it was forgotten on them. Ane of them was Meg Donaldson, the best woman in our regiment; for whate'er she might tak, she didna keep it a' to herself."

Plundering was rightly treated as a serious crime, but if more and regular pay had reached the soldiers, there might have been less temptation. An infantry private soldier at this period drew nominally 1/- a day. In barracks 5/6*d.* a week was stopped out of this for messing, washing and sundries. A sergeant drew 1/6½*d.* A cavalryman's pay was 1/3*d.* a day, with a stoppage of 7/1½*d.* a week. Promotion to non-commissioned rank was effected in the same manner as at the present day. Occasionally, though rarely, promotion to commissioned rank was given for good service in the field. After the fighting round Foz d'Aronce in March, 1811, the following order was issued from the Adjutant-General's office:

"The Commander of the Forces returns his thanks to the general and staff officers, officers and troops for their excellent conduct in the operations of the last two days, and he requests the commanding officers of the 43rd, 52nd, and first battalion of the 95th (Rifles) to name a sergeant of each regiment to be recommended for promotion to an ensigncy as a testimony of the particular approbation the Commander of the Forces entertains for the conduct of those regiments.—E. PAKENHAM, Deputy Adjt.-General."

Uniform and equipment generally were issued

without sufficient care for the comfort of the soldier, and the dress was frequently most unsuitable for the rigours of active service. However, there was a slow and gradual improvement. One messy, vexatious and rather disgusting regulation had quite recently been abolished. The queue, a short pigtail, which all ranks had to wear, and which was greased and then whitened with powder, had gone, to the great relief of every one. On active service the soldier had enough to do to keep fit and alive and his arms in good order, without such parade-ground customs. In this connection a story is told of Captain Le Marchant, afterwards killed at Salamanca, who was serving with a detachment of British cavalry in Austria in 1793. A surprise attack had been ordered for the following day, and the troops were to march off before sunrise. Le Marchant visited his men during the night, to make sure all was ready, and was surprised to find them lying with their faces to the ground. "What's the meaning of this?" he asked. "Well, sir," said the sergeant, "the men have just dressed their queues for to-morrow, and if they lie in any other position they will have to dress them again."

Elderly and retired officers protested vigorously against the abolition of the queue. As usual, they feared the Army was going to the dogs.

## IV

### *Wellesley and the Early Days*

THE ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH stock in Ireland has bred many great soldiers, of whom Wellington was the greatest. To have beaten half a dozen of Napoleon's marshals one after another, and finally to have stood up successfully against the last mighty onslaught of Napoleon himself, was achievement indeed. At first Wellington's high qualities were not appreciated, either by his army, the Government, or the enemy. Napoleon called him a "Sepoy general." Britain's enemies have often underestimated British troops and British commanders. The home Government with which Wellington had to deal gave him singularly little support. As has been said, his officers were sometimes insubordinate and disloyal to their chief, but towards the end of the Peninsular campaign he commanded universal trust. There arose a saying among the troops that the Duke's long nose was worth a division any day. His relentless, unswerving discipline at times bore hardly on individuals and on units, and was not always thought to be just. His famous order issued after Burgos, a scathing and possibly too sweeping an indictment of the whole army's indiscipline, caused resentment in those units to whom, in their opinion, it did not apply. He was respected and admired more than loved. His harshness



was not without effect. By it and by his other great qualities he re-made the Army from top to bottom. He created a magnificent fighting machine out of a force almost completely unorganised. At first the Army lacked an efficient service corps, or commissariat, as it was called. There were no engineers or pontoons to negotiate the swift rushing rivers of Portugal, nor indeed were there any in India. At first there was no siege train, nor field ambulance, nor proper base hospitals. A large proportion of the personnel was without adequate training or experience of war. Yet towards the end of the Peninsular campaigns the British Army was in proportion to its size the most formidable in the world. It was a fitting partner of the Royal Navy at the height of its glory after Trafalgar.

Wellington realised what sea power meant in war. His was the plan to land in Portugal an expeditionary force, and to establish a base for operations secured by the sea. In this way he could not be dislodged or taken in rear by the hitherto invincible armies of France. Here supplies and reinforcing drafts could reach him unhindered, here he could build up a Portuguese and later a Spanish army, here he could forge the weapon with which he was to shake the throne of the Master of Europe.

Wellington was a clear thinker and a prolific writer. His Irish blood made him liable to sudden flashes of hot temper, but perhaps his English ancestry may be given some of the credit for his resource, his coolness, his fearlessness not only in face of the enemy, but in accepting responsibility. Of his boldness in

war, the battle of Assaye and the crossing of the Douro in 1809 are examples. In times of crisis he was imperturbable. During the night of the assault on Badajoz, he could get no news. At length a staff officer came galloping up, his horse covered with foam. "Where is Lord Wellington? My lord, the attack on the breaches has failed. The men are in the ditch, their leaders killed. Strong reinforcements are required." A light was brought and Wellington read the message. His face was pale, but his voice and hand were perfectly steady. He ordered Hay's brigade to reinforce and coolly awaited fresh news. Up came another aide-de-camp. "Picton has the castle!" Relief and joy lit up the faces of all around. "Who says so?" rapped out Wellington. "Are you certain, sir?" "I have just left the castle with General Picton in possession." "With how many men?" "His division, my lord." "Ride back and tell him to hang on to it at all costs."

Even in Wellington's early days in India, an officer who served under him could record that his appearance and demeanour inspired confidence, and that experience confirmed this trust. "All looked up to him with respect, I might almost say awe." Unlike most of the French marshals, there was no ostentation about Wellington. He wore no be-feathered hat, no gold lace, no stars, no orders, but simply a plain low hat, a white collar, a grey overcoat, and a light sword. "I am going to dine with Wellington to-night," said a young Irishman to a group of brother officers after a battle in Spain. "Give me at least the prefix of Mr. before my name," said Lord Wellington, who happened

to ride by at the moment, and had overheard. "My lord," replied the quick-witted Irishman, "we do not speak of Mr. Caesar or Mr. Alexander, so why should I speak of Mr. Wellington?" For all Wellington's sternness, he too was not without a sense of humour. In Paris, after Waterloo, an English officer was walking on the boulevard, when a Frenchman rudely pushed him into the gutter. The Englishman promptly knocked him down with his fist. Unfortunately the Frenchman was a Marshal. He complained to the Duke of Wellington, but as he could not identify the officer, no disciplinary action was taken. In a general order, however, the Duke expressed a wish that British officers would in future abstain from beating Marshals of France.

Wellington's portraits show that underneath the calm dignified mask there was a man capable of deep feeling. His care of his wounded officers and men after Assaye was noted with gratitude. He visited the hospitals and sent in cases of Madeira from his own wine store. He constantly inspected hospitals in Spain and Portugal. In spite of the pressure of work after Busaco Wellington found time to write to Mrs. Napier about her wounded sons. It is said that he was greatly affected by the news of the Badajoz casualties, and that tears ran down his face after Waterloo for his men slaughtered in their thousands, for his friends and colleagues. He would hear old Picton swear no more, Gordon was dead, and de Lancey, the friend of his boyhood, and many another faithful companion. "Take my word for it," he said long afterwards, "if you had seen but one day of war, you would pray

to Almighty God that you might never see such a thing again."

The campaigns in India, though brilliantly conducted, are overshadowed by Wellington's achievements in Spain and at Waterloo. In this theatre of war, however, the names of those officers of his who were later to become famous begin to emerge. Colonel Arthur Wellesley at Vellore in 1799 was in command of a division of mixed troops under General Harris. Harris's force consisted of 21,000 men, of whom 5,300 were Europeans. His ally, the Nizam of Hyderabad, had 16,000. The joint army covered an enormous front, and including the baggage was seven miles in depth. To realise what it meant to move an army in the India of that date, it must be understood that Harris had in his train no fewer than 80,000 bullocks for his baggage, commissariat, ammunition, and forage for the cavalry and for themselves. Most of this vast herd were pack animals. The Nizam had 36,000 more animals, and in addition there were elephants, camels, coolies, and a mob of followers and private servants.

Harris's antagonist in this year was Tippoo Sahib, the Tiger of Mysore, who was brought to battle at Mallavelly. Two other young colonels who were with the army, Sherbrooke and Stapleton Cotton, were later to serve with distinction under Arthur Wellesley. Sherbrooke was the officer in command of the picquets. Cotton had the 25th Light Dragoons and a regiment of native cavalry. The army was in touch with the enemy, and the two pushed forward to cover the Quartermaster-General's parties who were making camp. The main body of the enemy's cavalry became

so menacing that Cotton was obliged to put himself in position to check them, while Sherbrooke called in the picquets on Cotton's left. Harris ordered up the guns to answer Tippoo's artillery. He also disposed three infantry brigades on Sherbrooke's left. Wellesley's division, supported by a brigade of cavalry, came up on the left again, in *échelon* of battalions. The whole line then advanced, stumbling over the low-lying uneven ground. The troops kept their direction and alignment with difficulty, for here and there were patches of jungle. Ten thousand of Tippoo's infantry came on to meet the 33rd Regiment at the head of Wellesley's *échelon*. They took its fire at sixty yards range, and began to crumble as the gleaming British bayonets came nearer and nearer. Seeing them waver, the cavalry charged and broke them up. Tippoo's cavalry and infantry attacked the rest of the British line, but sepoy and European alike stood firm. Tippoo was soon in full retreat. Sherbrooke and Cotton attempted to work round his flank, but the pursuit did not go far. Harris had to return to his camp, the only spot for miles where there was water.

In India at this time there was an almost inextricable tangle of wars, state against state, with brigands as a further complication. A few years later there was trouble north of Poona. Two Mahratta chieftains, Rao Scindia of Gwalior and the Rajah of Berar, sat down with their armies on the frontier of the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Company's ally. Wellesley, now a Major-General, to whom his brother the Governor-General had entrusted the command of the army in the field, demanded an explanation of this threat,

None was forthcoming, and after due warning, military operations were commenced.

The first major task attempted was the assault and capture of Ahmednugger. The town was walled, and was taken by escalade, and it was in this fight that Wellesley first met Colin Campbell, of the 78th Regiment. While the General was watching the storming parties, he saw the left column's failure retrieved by an officer who seized a ladder, slammed it against the wall, and rushed up alone. On reaching the top he was thrown down. Picking himself up at once, he re-ascended, only to be flung down again. For the third time he scrambled up the ladder, this time with some men at his heels. There was a scuffle on the top, the officer hewing his way through the defenders, his men stabbing with the bayonet. Soon a crowd of British troops flooded into the town to join their comrades. Wellington said: "As soon as I got in I made inquiries about him, and found that his name was Colin Campbell, and that he was wounded. I sought him out and said a few words to him, with which he seemed greatly delighted. I liked his blunt manly manner, and never lost sight of him afterwards. He became one of my aides-de-camp, and is now, as you know, Governor of Plymouth." He was on Wellesley's divisional staff at Copenhagen in 1807, and followed him to Waterloo.

Meanwhile Scindia and his fellow-adventurer crossed over into the Nizam's territory like a swarm of locusts, eating up the country. Their armies outnumbered the 8,000 or so of Wellesley by about six to one. Wellesley's men were wearied by a long march

in the heat, and came up against the Mahrattas unexpectedly. Colonel Stevenson, who was with the Nizam's army, was not due to join Wellesley until the morrow. Faced with the certain loss of his baggage if he retreated, and with the fear of a cloud of cavalry to harass him, Wellesley instantly attacked, a daring decision, but one that showed the born soldier. This battle of Assaye (1803) was hot work, hardly fought, and the loss was severe. Lieutenant Colin Campbell, now on Wellesley's staff, said that the General was in the thick of it the whole time. Wellesley recommended Campbell to General Lake, the Commander-in-Chief in India, for promotion.

There were many instances of individual heroism among Wellesley's young officers that day. Lieutenant Nathan Wilson of the 19th Hussars had his arm smashed by a cannon shot, but charged with one arm only. Captain George Sale, also 19th Hussars, attacked a Mahratta gunner so fiercely that his horse stuck between the cannon and the wheel. He was rescued from this predicament by a sergeant. Another of the Clan Campbell, who had lost an arm in a previous war, and who had recently broken his only wrist, slashed away with his sword in his damaged hand, with his bridle rein held in his teeth.

At the end of the day the enemy fled with the bayonet's point at his back, and Stevenson came up in time to throw the fugitives into disorder. The field was heaped with slain, abandoned cannon lay everywhere. The exhausted troops and their commander flung themselves on the ground among the dead, and slept till morning light.

Before these events had taken place in India, before Wellesley's name had become known, two of his most trusted officers, Rowland Hill and Thomas Graham, were at the commencement of their careers as soldiers against the forces of revolutionary France. On the 28th August, 1793, Admiral Hood disembarked at Toulon an expeditionary force of some 1,200 British and 3,000 Spanish troops. A week later Lord Mulgrave landed to take command. On his staff was a young man of twenty-one named Rowland Hill. Hill had a brain of the highest quality, but even more remarkable than his ability was the affection he inspired in his subordinates. Captain Warre, writing in 1808, described him as "a very pleasant mild man, and much liked." "Daddy" Hill was more than liked. He was loved.

Of his kindness and thoughtfulness there are many stories told. A major wounded at Albuera was slowly making his own way back (as they often did) to Lisbon. He called at General Hill's headquarters to report. Next morning Hill himself put the painfully hobbling man upon his road with a basket of tea, sugar, bread and butter, and best of all an enormous venison pasty. He could bestow a drink upon a tired and thirsty private, or a friendly nod and a word on some young officer. "He was the very picture of an English country gentleman." His fresh colour, his calm and kindly voice, his firm yet humorous mouth, made people love him almost at sight. He looked after his men, he visited the hospitals, punished looting, took care of the wretched inhabitants of the country, and treated his prisoners well. Hill was one of the few men whom Wellington could trust absolutely to carry out his



orders. Yet he was no machine. He had originality and initiative. Beneath his calm controlled manner there was audacity and decision, as was notably shown at Arroyo de Molinos and at the bridge of Almaraz. Hill showed promise from the first. When a young captain at Toulon, General O'Hara said of him as he left the mess room, "That young man will rise to be one of the first soldiers of the age." He won the liking of Wellington, not altogether an easy task. Wellington was more attached to Hill than to any of his general officers.

Rowland Hill was the fourth child of sixteen, and came from an ancient Shropshire family. His father had five sons at Waterloo, all of whom marvellously survived. He was rather a delicate quiet boy, and astonished his parents when he announced that he wanted to join the Army. He was gazetted ensign in 1790, and in the following year his father bought him a lieutenancy in the 53rd Foot. His first taste of active service was as A.D.C. to Lord Mulgrave.

Mulgrave's force occupied the ill-designed ring of forts round Toulon, but the small number of trustworthy troops available made this garrison duty very tiring. The Spanish contingent was untrained and almost useless. The key fort was Fort Croix de Faron, perched on a precipitous height. There was, by the way, a young lieutenant-colonel named Napoleon Bonaparte in charge of the French artillery. The French cut off the British picquet on Faron, whereupon the Spaniards hastily evacuated the fort, and the French took possession. Since a hostile occupation of Faron could not be allowed if the allied troops were

to remain at Toulon, an assault was organised. A combined force of British, Spanish, Neapolitans, and Piedmontese brilliantly stormed Faron, in spite of the difficult and exhausting climb and the lack of water. The leader of the British storming party was Thomas Graham of Balgowan, a man of forty-five, who, like Hill, had been acting as aide-de-camp to Lord Mulgrave.

Graham was born in 1750, and went to Christchurch, Oxford. He was a typical Scottish laird, fond of horses and dogs, and of all a country gentleman's occupations and pursuits, crops and hay harvest, forestry and foxhounds. He married in 1774 a strikingly beautiful woman, the subject of a famous picture by Gainsborough. It was in this year, shortly before his marriage, that he was held up by footpads in Park Lane, London, while driving with his fiancée and her sister. The incident is worth recording, since it shows what a piquant contrast there was between the Park Lane of a century and a half ago and the roaring thoroughfare it is to-day. One of the roughs came up to the door of the carriage with a pistol in his hand. Graham leaped out, seized him, and they both fell to the ground. His companions made off, the captured rascal in due course found himself in Newgate gaol, and Graham went on to his party, his gay clothes stained and spattered with mud.

The marriage was childless, and Mrs. Graham's health was delicate. The Scottish winters were too severe for her, and a large part of each year was spent in Spain and Portugal or in some other sunny climate. They travelled about the Continent a good deal,

particularly in Spain, where the ladies of the party rode in litters carried by pack mules. The fact that Britain was actually at war with Spain made no difference at all. The summers were spent in his beloved Scotland. There is a record of what may have been the first cricket match played north of the Tweed, for a thousand guineas a side, between elevens captained by the Duke of Atholl and Colonel Talbot at Shaw Park on the 3rd September, 1785. Thomas Graham, playing for the latter side, which won easily, made 20 runs in each innings. Two years later he bought Lynedoch, a romantically beautiful property near Perth. From it he took his title in years to come.

Unhappily Mrs. Graham developed tuberculosis, and died in 1792 at sea off Hyères in the South of France. Graham determined to bring her body home to be buried in Scotland. As he was driving through a town with the coffin, a crowd of half-drunk revolutionaries gathered round the windows of the vehicle. "Aristocrat!" they howled. "That coffin will be full of pistols and daggers. Break it open, break it open!" White with fury, Graham tried to prevent the sacrilege, but vainly. When the ruffians saw the decomposing body, they went away laughing.

War broke out shortly afterwards. Graham, to obtain distraction from his grief, and being not unnaturally eager to fight the revolutionaries, joined Admiral Hood's fleet as a volunteer. He was a civilian of 44, with no training to arms. The assault on Faron was the first time he had been under fire. Struck by his courage, his eye for ground, and his behaviour





generally, Mulgrave persuaded him to take up soldiering as a profession. His position continued to be quite irregular for years. In 1794 he was given the rank of honorary colonel for having raised at his own expense the 90th Foot, the Perthshire Volunteers. He gave Hill a majority in it. Hill had made himself responsible for a company of the regiment, and later bought the lieutenant-colonelcy. Graham's commission was worded as follows:

"Greting. We, reposing especial trust and confidence in your loyalty, courage, and good conduct, do by these presents constitute and appoint you to be Lieutenant-Colonel-Commandant of our Ninetieth Regiment of Foot or the Perthshire Volunteers, without permanent rank or half pay. . . ."

For fifteen years he served with no other rank. It was not until 1809 after long and distinguished service and after repeated and fruitless applications that he was gazetted as a Major-General on the regular establishment.

Graham could speak German and Italian as well as four other languages. Partly owing to these accomplishments he was appointed military attaché to the Austrian army, which in 1796-7 was heavily defeated by Napoleon. He served on the staff in the British operations against Malta and Minorca, and with the Austrians again. In spite of the disparity in age, Graham became very friendly with Hill. The friendship was lifelong. They died within a year of each other.

At the end of October at Toulon a new commander from home took over, but if Henry Dundas, the

Secretary of State for War, had sent with him the long-promised reinforcements, the enterprise might not have ended so ignominiously as it did. The winter was coming on. There were no tents, no camp equipment, no field guns even, and Bonaparte was organising a siege train. Sickness broke out among the troops. A sortie was defeated with heavy loss, and the position became precarious. One by one the forts were bombarded and stormed. Then the town was bombarded. Eventually Hood re-embarked the worn-out, half-naked and hungry soldiers, victims of carelessness and ignorance at home.

At the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century British troops were in action everywhere, and wandered all over the earth. Some of the theatres of war were of secondary importance, or indeed of no importance at all. The South American adventures ought never to have been undertaken. But Egypt could not have been ignored. A vital link in our overseas communications to-day, its occupation by the French in the Napoleonic Wars was recognised, as a source of danger. The threat to our Mediterranean Fleet was removed by Nelson's smashing victory of the Nile in 1798, but though Napoleon went off on an expedition to Syria he left French governors and a French army. Turkey sent a force to try to recover the territory, but the French easily disposed of the Turks. In 1801, therefore, a British army under Sir Ralph Abercromby landed near Alexandria, and completely defeated the French general. In this action the 28th Regiment was led by Colonel Edward Paget, younger brother of Lord Paget, both of whom served

later with distinction under Wellington. Edward Paget was born in 1775. By the time he was nineteen he was commanding the 28th as its lieutenant-colonel, a fact which shows what could be done by purchase and one's family. He had served in the Low Countries, and was with a detachment of his regiment in the naval battle of St. Vincent in 1797. The soldiers were acting as marines under Admiral Sir John Jervis. Here at Alexandria the 28th did a famous thing. At one period during the battle the French penetrated the British line, and the 28th found themselves surrounded. The rear rank coolly faced about, and the regiment fought the matter out back to back. Paget was severely wounded in the neck.

Rowland Hill, with his new and untried regiment, the 90th, was also with Abercromby. A week before the big battle the 90th were caught in the open by French cavalry, but the young soldiers stood their ground like veterans and repulsed the attack. Hill was knocked senseless by a spent bullet. The following year the British force was brought home. Hill and the 90th landed at Portsmouth after a stormy voyage, and very soon he was sent to Ireland as a brigadier-general on the staff. Service in Ireland was as usual unpopular with British troops. There was some danger of invasion, and Roman Catholics suffered many and grievous disabilities, but at the same time had no wish to become a province of France.

Just as they did in the Great War of 1914-18, so British officers in those days appeared all over the world. Some of Wellington's future lieutenants found themselves at the Cape of Good Hope, and then suddenly



and unexpectedly in action in South America. As far back as 1796 a spasmodic and blundering war with Spain had broken out. Ten years later, while it still dragged on, a certain Colonel Beresford was sent by the Governor of the Cape, with Commodore Sir Home Popham, R.N., to attack Buenos Aires. This was by no means his first experience of war. He held his first commission as an ensign in 1785 while in his teens, and was sent to Nova Scotia in the following year. Here he lost his left eye in a shooting accident. Never handsome, this misfortune did not improve his appearance. Later he purchased a company in the 69th, in which regiment he served as an officer of marines in Admiral Hood's flagship. It was customary then for regular army regiments to act as marines. Beresford was present at the Toulon fiasco in 1793, and distinguished himself in an attack on Corsica. In 1795 he is found in command of the 88th (Connaught Rangers) with an expeditionary force to the West Indies. Only about 200 men of the 88th ever reached their destination. A terrible storm scattered the convoy.

Next he is in India, and then in Egypt. He was given a brigade under Sir David Baird, and with him made the famous march across a waterless desert to the Nile to reinforce Abercromby in 1801. Then came garrison duty in Egypt, a spell of home leave, and in 1805 he was at the Cape of Good Hope. His motto might well have been that of the Royal Artillery, "Ubique."

William Carr Beresford, to give him his full name, was born in 1768, the illegitimate son of G. de la Poer

Beresford, Earl of Tyrone. Tall and broad and immensely strong, faithful and loyal always to his chief, no strategist but a born organiser, he proved himself of great value to Wellington in his Peninsular wars.

The attempt on Buenos Aires was "one of the wildest schemes that ever entered the head of a roving adventurer." It appealed strongly to the adventurous Irish soldier. It was mad from the start. The fleet left the Cape quite unguarded. His Majesty's Government was manning, equipping, and financing expedition after expedition to all quarters of the globe, but this was too much even for the Government. A vessel was sent to recall Popham, but long before she reached South America, Buenos Aires had been taken. Well over a million dollars in hard money had been seized and sent home, Popham and Beresford were popular heroes, and the Government had to acquiesce.

In this enterprise Beresford had under his command the 71st Regiment, with Colonel Denis Pack, and a few dragoons, seamen and marines. With this handful he took Buenos Aires by bluff. He merely walked in. He took a position in the central square of the place, but he felt that his position was a perilous one. This was indeed obvious, for the population numbered 50,000 or more and there were eighty-four guns in the defences. Beresford sent by a frigate to the Governor of the Cape an urgent request for reinforcements. These were promptly sent, but the operation took many weary weeks. Before their arrival a rising had broken out, and after heavy loss among his little band after a desperate fight, Beresford was compelled to surrender.

He and the other survivors were carried away hundreds of miles up country. When the reinforcements did reach Buenos Aires, their commanders were staggered to find that Beresford and his force had vanished. They sailed on to Monte Video and took it. Meanwhile Beresford, with Denis Pack, who will be met again later, escaped during their journey inland, and joined the British officer in charge at Monte Video. Beresford went home to be promoted to Major-General, and appointed Governor of Madeira in the Portuguese interest.

After news of Beresford's capture had been received, Colonel Robert Craufurd was given by the War Office the rank of brigadier over the heads of many officers senior to him, in order to go on active service with yet another South American expedition. He was about forty-two years old at this time, and he also had an eventful career behind him. Like Graham he had been attached to the Austrian army. He knew German well, and had translated Prussian military textbooks into English. Theoretically he was the best equipped of Wellington's officers. Craufurd made a good start in his profession, for with the help of "influence" he had obtained a company in the 75th at the age of nineteen. These early promotions, unobtainable without wealth or patronage, sometimes brought merit quickly to the front, as in the case of Wellington himself. Craufurd, however, seems to have stuck. Perhaps his vile sarcastic temper made him unpopular and spoilt his chances.

He managed to get a lieutenant-colonelcy by 1798. He had seen a considerable amount of service

in India, Holland, Ireland, and Austria, but the Austrian campaigns were defeats. Utter failure also was the result of the Duke of York's expedition to Holland. Craufurd was decidedly unlucky. In 1801, still a lieutenant-colonel and with little hope of further advancement, he went on half-pay, and entered the House of Commons as the member for a "pocket borough" in his brother's gift. About this time the volunteer movement spread rapidly over Britain, which was faced with the threat of invasion by Napoleon. The result was that the country gentlemen who formed the personnel of the House of Commons were nearly all Colonels of Volunteers. Craufurd was therefore known as the "Regular Colonel." As in the field, so in the House, Craufurd was emphatic and downright. He sternly criticised Pitt's Bill for the reorganisation of the Army and its reserves and the plans for fortifications. When Pitt died, a Whig administration, the "Ministry of All the Talents" came in, and Craufurd was no longer friendless. He was given a brigade under General Whitelocke. The ministry must have buried their talents, for of all the incompetent generals with which the British Army has from time to time been afflicted, Whitelocke was one of the very worst. Craufurd's first chance ended in disaster.

If Beresford was the Irishman, mingling with his undoubted ability a dash of carelessness, Hill the typical Englishman of the best type, and Graham the clever steady Scot, Craufurd was the fiery Celtic type of Scotland, though he was descended on his father's side from good old Lowland stock, and Graham, the

laird of Balgowan, was a Perthshire man. In some ways Craufurd and Picton, the Welshman from Pembrokeshire, were not at all unlike. Both were hot-tempered, though just and accessible to their men, neither achieved the honour their prowess merited, and both fell on the battlefield. Craufurd was short of stature, dark, blue-chinned, imperious in manner, with a lively quick wit. In appearance he was very different from the tall stern Welshman.

Craufurd sailed under secret orders from Falmouth near the end of the year 1806. Some of the troops had already been on board for months, but under good officers they had kept their health. Craufurd himself made a very careful inspection of their quarters and showed the greatest concern for the comfort of his men. Whatever his faults may have been as a practical tactician or strategist, he was a great disciplinarian, a forceful commander, and a maker of good soldiers. Long before he arrived in South America, Monte Video had been taken. Events quickly showed what a hopelessly inefficient officer Lieutenant-General Whitelocke was. Craufurd's force arrived at Monte Video on the 14th June, 1807. Some of his troops had been in the ships for fully nine months, and were weakened by ships' rations of salt junk and biscuit. According to instructions from home, the plan was to take Buenos Aires, which Beresford had won and lost. The force was disembarked near the city. Whitelocke had at his disposal some 8,000 men in all. Craufurd had one of four brigades, a weak one, consisting of a battalion of the 95th (Rifles) with a number of other light companies. The advance was over almost impossible

ground. The guns stuck fast in a swamp, the food was made uneatable by mud, even the rum casks had to be stove in and abandoned in the morass. It is a sad tale of misfortune, mismanagement, and bad generalship.

In the general advance Craufurd, going ahead on his own initiative, came up against a strong resistance. He personally led his light troops in a resolute charge, routed the Spanish foot soldiers and gunners, who did not wait for his cold steel, and hustled them into the suburbs. With prompt support the city might have been won, but Major-General Leveson-Gower, Whitelocke's equally useless second-in-command, ordered Craufurd to withdraw. Raging, Craufurd obeyed.

It was decided to carry Buenos Aires by assault in four days' time. This delay was invaluable to the defenders. The dispositions were utterly inept. Buenos Aires was a city of 50,000 people, laid out in rectangular streets and squares. The attacking forces were split up into small details, each to advance down a separate street. Apparently some sort of surprise was intended. No firing was to be allowed until the troops were well within the city, and it appears that the men were ordered to unload their muskets. Loading being a slow and complicated operation, this order seems almost incredibly stupid. The advance began at dawn. The attackers were allowed to entangle themselves in the streets in silence, not a shot being fired by the defenders. Suddenly from every flat roof within range a hail of lead poured down upon the unfortunate British soldiers, who were struggling to load their muskets. In addition grape shot sprayed

them from guns placed in trenches across the roads. Spaniards are always formidable in street fighting, and the whole population was armed. The doors of the houses were assailed with musket-butts, hatchets, and feet, but they were fast barricaded. In spite of all, isolated detachments won through to the principal squares, with heavy loss, it is true. Craufurd and Denis Pack each took half of the light brigade. Half of Pack's men were shot down, and he retired. Craufurd occupied a convent, but found it untenable. Evacuation was impossible, for he was surrounded by thousands of Spaniards, and after a hopeless resistance he was forced to surrender. Some of the other detachments were in similar plight. Whitlocke had not the tenacity or pluck to exploit his partial success. He showed that he had no grip of the situation, and the whole force had lost confidence in him. Parleys were begun, and all prisoners exchanged. Whitlocke acted wisely for once, in agreeing to evacuate South America altogether. After his court-martial at home, the toast in the taverns and ale-houses was: *Success to grey hairs, but none to white locks*. At the trial Craufurd was acquitted of any blame for his surrender. The surrender, however, had been a bitter blow to his pride. He never forgot it, it never ceased to hurt him, and when he went to the Peninsula, it was as a bitter and disappointed man.

Yet another of these scattered adventures was the attack on the French in the south of Italy. Here Galbraith Lowry Cole comes to the fore, another of the band of Anglo-Irishmen, born in Dublin in 1772. Being a young man of wealth and good family (the

son of the Earl of Enniskillen) he was a captain before he was twenty. He bought his way up to a lieutenant-colonelcy in the Coldstream Guards. Thereafter he fought his way up. When he was a young officer he was in love with Kitty Pakenham before she married Wellington. After some service in the West Indies and in Egypt, he obtained the brevet rank of full colonel in 1801, and four years later, having exchanged into the 27th (Inniskilling Fusiliers), he was sent to Malta as a brigadier. He was then thirty-two, a tall, fine-looking man, cordial and attractive. The following year saw him in Sicily, as officer next in seniority to Sir John Stuart. Stuart had a British force of 7,500 men, who were in possession of the island. They had little to do but to keep an eye on Regnier, a French general who was holding the province of Calabria across the Strait of Messina, in the toe of Italy. Stuart was bored with doing nothing. He thought that something more active might be attempted. He talked it over with Cole, and decided to embark 5,000 infantry and a few light guns, and land in Italy. This he did without opposition, and marched inland to Maida, where he came up against Regnier. Cole's brigade consisted of the 27th, which was his own regiment, and a picked composite battalion of grenadiers. He was on the left of the line. The French left quickly gave way, but their right opposite Cole was very strong and was supported by cavalry. His impetuous junior officers urged an immediate frontal attack. Cole was too wary. He drew back his own left to prevent his flank being turned, and awaited the arrival of supports before going forward and completing the rout of



Regnier. It is interesting to compare this action with Cole's conduct at Albuera. In this case he refused to attack without orders. At Albuera he did that very thing. Events proved him right in both cases.

Pursuit without cavalry was impossible, and Stuart marched his men back to the shore. A bathing parade was held. Each brigade in turn went into the water, the remainder resting on their arms. While Cole's men were splashing happily in the sea, a staff officer came galloping along the sands. "The enemy's cavalry is upon us!" Instantly the bugles rang out an alarm. The waiting troops stood to their arms. Cole's brigade of hairy lads rushed out of the water, slung their belts over their naked dripping bodies, grabbed their muskets and fell in, not without some grim laughter, prepared to fight for their lives in their birthday uniforms. The alarm was false. The staff officer had taken a herd of stampeding oxen and a whirlwind of dust for hostile cavalry.

Most of these scattered world-wide adventures were soon to have their ending. Britain at last was about to play her part in one main theatre of war. The curtain rings up on the seven years drama of the Peninsula.

## V

### *The Peninsular War Begins*

IN 1808 NAPOLEON BONAPARTE was master of Europe. Not even Philip the Second of Spain, two and a half centuries before, had held such dominion over the Continent. Napoleon's empire was comparable to that of Rome in her greatest days. Everywhere the blue, white and red flag flew triumphantly. Prussia was in the dust, the vast territories of Austria had been overrun, Russia had been confined to her borders, Belgium, Holland and Italy lay sullen under the conqueror, Madrid was occupied, and Portugal suffered as its ruler a Marshal of France. To hold these conquests Napoleon had a mighty and unbeaten army. In the Peninsula there were 200,000 Frenchmen, who held all the Portuguese and most of the Spanish fortresses. To oppose them there was nothing but a rabble of Spaniards, a beaten force, waging a desperate guerilla war, and a Portuguese army, without discipline, effective leaders or supplies, its rightful prince in Brazil, and an emergency government in despair. But Britain held the seas. Napoleon may not have realised it, but that fact has meant the downfall of despots before, and since.

The provisional governments of Spain and Portugal appealed to the British for help against the invasion and occupation of their countries. They did not appeal in vain. So began the long war that was to sap

Napoleon's strength, the running sore, the Spanish ulcer, that did so much to bring him down.

On the 12th July, 1808, Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Wellesley sailed from Cork with 9,000 men under his command to begin the series of campaigns which were to have such a triumphant ending. He had a quick passage, and after calling at Coruña to consult with the British and Spanish authorities on the spot, he decided to land his troops at the mouth of the river Mondego, on the coast of Portugal, away north of the Tagus estuary. General Spencer was at Cadiz, and was ordered by Wellesley to join him on the Mondego with his 3,000 men. Wellesley's first General Order on landing ran as follows:

"The troops are to understand that Portugal is a country friendly to His Majesty . . . no injury should be done that it is possible to avoid. . . . The Lieutenant-General declares his determination to punish in the most exemplary manner all who may be convicted of acts of outrage and of plunder against the person or property of any of the people of the country . . . proper behaviour in churches . . . the Host is to be saluted in the streets."

Unhappily the officers would not or could not completely control their men, and there were often complaints of bad behaviour on the part of the British troops. Considering the mixed character of the recruits swept into the Army's net some misconduct is not surprising. Such incidents happen in every war. It is all a question of discipline of the right sort. Gradually, very gradually, as the years passed discipline improved, and misconduct grew less frequent.

Marshal Junot, after subduing a revolt with some difficulty, was occupying Lisbon with his army. Wellesley determined to march on Lisbon. The Marshal detached a division under General Laborde to oppose his advance. Laborde threw forward picquets into the small town of Obidos, and took up a position at Roliça, four miles away, overlooking the valley of Obidos. This latter place stood up with its towers out of the plain. A long aqueduct strode across the levels, there were mountains away to the east, and on the west rolled the Atlantic. Roliça lay in a tangle of rocks and hills and woods, its church towers and houses with their verandahs set in a wild romantic country along the coast. Wellesley drove in the French outposts at Obidos, and in this skirmish fell Lieutenant Bunbury of the 95th, the first officer to be killed in the war.

Two days later Wellesley pushed Laborde out of Roliça. General Hill comes into the picture here. He led the frontal attack. His skirmishers fought their way along narrow paths and deep gullies, scrambling uphill among a mass of evergreen trees and shrubs until they came to more open country. Through over-eagerness the 29th Regiment went ahead too fast and was caught in a murderous fire. The shock made the whole line stagger and recoil. Hill saw the confusion, galloped up, and put himself at the head of the regiment, which had lost its colonel. The 29th instantly regained its tone, and led by Hill fired a steady volley and charged with the bayonet. Rifleman Harris, who saw this, said: "Few men could have conducted the business with more coolness and quietude

of manner under such a storm of balls as he was exposed to." Both the frontal and flank attacks were successful after hard fighting. Laborde, retreating, joined Junot, who prepared for battle a few miles from Vimieiro, a village close to the sea where Wellesley had taken up a new position.

At daybreak on the 21st August the British stood to arms. Not a sign of the French was to be seen. At seven a cloud of dust appeared beyond the nearest hills, and soon column after column of the enemy poured down to fight, the sun glittering on their bright arms. The British took up their position in battle line in the wooded broken country, General Hill being in reserve. The day ended in a complete victory for them. One significant fact about the engagement is that a French column in massed formation preceded by skirmishers advanced uphill against the British, who received it in line, two deep, and fired a volley at half pistol shot. This blew away the head of the column and caused many casualties on its flanks. The British finished the job with the bayonet, being led through the clinging smoke by Fane, their brigadier. As the skirmishing battalion of the 95th fell back on their battle line, Fane had difficulty in restraining his men. "Damn them," they shouted, "charge, charge!" "Don't be too eager, men," said he coolly. "I don't want you to advance just yet. Well done, 95th," he said as he rode up and down the line, "well done, 43rd and 52nd, well done all. I'll not forget, if I live, to report your conduct to-day. They shall hear of it in England, my lads!" A man of the 95th broke ranks and ran up to Fane, and handed him a green feather.

"Wear this, general, for the sake of the 95th!" Fane stuck it in his hat. When at last he gave the word to go forward they went down to meet the French like a torrent breaking its banks. The cheering rang out through the noise of cannon and musket and the clatter of the Frenchmen's accoutrements as they turned and broke.

Rifleman Harris of the 95th tells a story of "Farmer" Hill, as he was often called by the men. It was just before Roliça. The Rifles had halted. Harris was leaning on his rifle, having eased himself of his pack, when Hill and an aide-de-camp rode up and dismounted at a house just opposite to where Harris was standing. Hill spoke to the aide, who called Harris and gave him a dollar. "See if you can get some wine," he said, "for we are devilish thirsty here." There was a thirsty clamorous crowd round the wine shop in the village, and Harris had great difficulty in getting a pipkin full. It was almost as hard to pay for the drink as to get it, so Harris ran back to the house. The general was loosening his sword-belt as Harris handed him the wine. "Drink first, Rifleman," he said, and then, "drink it all up." Harris did so, and returned the dollar to him. "Keep the money, my man" said the general. "Here's another dollar. Get me another draught, and be quick." Harris lost no time. Hill shared the pipkin with the aide. Harris loved the general for evermore.

The action at Vimieiro affords an opportunity to speak briefly of the two-deep formation of infantry in line adopted by Wellington and his general officers. The French used to advance in dense massed columns.

Only their leading rank on a narrow front could fire effectively. The British, on the other hand, had effective fire along their whole line. They would keep in check the French *tirailleurs* and harass the enemy columns with a cloud of skirmishers of light infantry such as the 43rd, 52nd, or 95th, armed with light muskets or rifles. This screen would retire on the main line, which was usually in position off the skyline, just behind the summit of a hill and secure from artillery fire. The main line would then advance, shatter the head and flanks of the column with their musketry, the rest being left to the bayonet or the cavalry. It was essential to cover the flanks of the line by physical features, or by cavalry and artillery. At Ligny, before Waterloo, Blücher strung out his army on a downward slope. Wellington, when he saw the dispositions of the Prussian marshal, remarked, "Those fellows will be damnably mauled." They were.

At this time the British Government was in a very vacillating mood. Almost as soon as they had appointed Sir Arthur Wellesley to command in the Peninsula, they superseded him by Sir Harry Burrard, the cautious controlling the bold. Wellesley had intended to let General Ferguson, who had led the 36th and the 71st very ably, and Hill with his reserves, follow up the victory of Vimieiro. Burrard, who was present at the battle, took command after the fighting was over and refused to move. Wellesley protested vainly, and being compelled to acquiesce, remarked that there was nothing left to be done except shoot red-legged partridges. Burrard was even more quickly

superseded by Sir Hew Dalrymple. The Government did not know its own mind for two days together. Then followed the Convention of Cintra, an armistice by which Junot was to embark his 25,000 troops at Lisbon and evacuate Portugal altogether with the honours of war. General John Hope was appointed commandant of Lisbon, and Sir Arthur Wellesley went home.

Hope was a great tall hefty man, cool, daring, careless of himself. He was a cousin of Thomas Graham. At the age of thirty in 1793 he was a lieutenant-colonel, had served in the West Indies and Ireland, and in 1801 had been wounded at Alexandria under Abercromby. As a divisional general he was with Sir John Moore on his retreat to the coast, and executed a memorable march over the Guadaramas to join Moore at Salamanca.

Moore never served under Wellington, but his brilliant campaign falls into place in this story, since so many of Wellington's officers were with him. In the autumn of 1808 Moore found himself in Portugal with 10,000 men under orders to take over the command of the British forces already in Portugal, together with Sir David Baird's contingent which had landed at Coruña. The total strength at his disposal was about 24,000. He was in an extraordinary situation. His orders were vague, so far as they existed at all. He was to co-operate with the Spanish armies in the defence and liberation of their country, but no one could tell him where they were or who was really in command. The countryside was miserable and poverty-stricken, and had already been swept



bare by marching hordes. There seemed to be little prospect of getting fuel, forage or food. Moore had £25,000 in cash, but that would not go far, and Baird's force landed with no money at all. His supply services were in charge of inexperienced men. The rains of winter were approaching. The new troops were well-found, but the men who had fought at Roliça and Vimieiro were ragged and almost shoeless.

Napoleon had half a million fighting men under arms in Europe. Not far short of half of these were called to Spain. The veterans of Jena and Austerlitz entered the dark passes of the Pyrenees. "Soldiers!" said Napoleon, "I have need of you! The hideous presence of the Leopard contaminates the peninsula of Spain and Portugal. In terror he must fly before you. Let us bear our triumphant eagles to the Pillars of Hercules." There was much more to the same effect, very like a speech of a modern dictator, and Napoleon really and fully intended to carry his arms to Lisbon and the south in person. In Napier's arresting phrase, "his hovering eagles cast a gloomy shadow over Spain."

Moore's headquarters left Lisbon on the 26th October, 1808. By the 8th November, they were at Almcida. He pushed eastwards to Salamanca where his scattered forces were to concentrate. He was still hoping for Spanish support, but though he had organised, supplied, equipped and marched his troops 400 miles in six weeks, he was too late. The Spanish armies had been utterly defeated already. Hope, that capable, firm and zealous officer, was marching by Talavera with the artillery and the ammunition

column, 3,000 infantry and 900 horse. He heard at Talavera that, in view of Napoleon's approach, all was confusion in Madrid, and that he could hope for nothing from the Spaniards. He went to Escorial. There with great difficulty he got draught oxen to drag his guns over the Guadarama mountains, and turned westwards for Salamanca to join Moore.

Moore made his great resolve to strike at the communications of the French. He began his advance on the 11th December, and marched as if to engage Soult, who was holding the line of the river Carrion to the northward. He thus hoped to draw Napoleon away from Madrid, and so spoil his plan to overrun the rich southern provinces of Spain. He took the terrific risk of being caught, of having his own retreat cut off. It was a gamble with Time.

The armies came into collision at Sahagun, an affair of outposts, shots, scuffles, gallopings, with fire struck from the cobbles of the road. Then Lord Paget came tearing up with 500 of the 15th Hussars, and dashed into about 600 French dragoons. A furious little engagement took place, the French being dispersed with loss. Lord Paget was the eldest son of the Earl of Uxbridge. Educated at Westminster and Christchurch, he was a very handsome man and was reputed to be the best horseman in England. He was a dashing cavalry leader of the type that has vanished from modern war. He had seen service in Holland, and joined Moore with two brigades of light cavalry. He appears again at Waterloo as the Earl of Uxbridge.

Sahagun was a wretched, miserable little place. In all this country the people were poor and half-

starved. The land was barren, treeless and foodless. The prospect of a retreat by wild mountain tracks in the depth of winter, ill-clad and hungry as many of the troops were, made the stoutest hearts shrink. Yet retreat was the order. Napoleon tore up his plans, and began a forced march from Madrid to cut off Moore. In the evening of the 22nd December, 50,000 Frenchmen were in the foothills of the Guadarama range. Deep snow choked the passes, storms of hail and sleet lashed the exhausted French, urged on by the fiery spirit of the Emperor. The instant that Moore heard of Napoleon's move he gave the order to retreat. He was just in time.

Lord Paget's little force was of great value in the rearguard. On one occasion he discovered a strong body of Ney's horsemen on a rising mound near the road. The ground was soggy with snow and rain. Undaunted, two squadrons of the 10th Hussars rode up the hill, fell upon the enemy and routed them, actually taking a hundred prisoners. And this was after having been actively occupied in rearguard work for twelve successive days.

Here Craufurd comes on to the stage again. In October he had sailed from Falmouth with reinforcements and joined Moore in December. He was now a major-general, and never attained higher rank. After the passage of the army over the Esla, Craufurd who had been left behind with the Light Brigade as a covering force, began the destruction of the bridge. This was on the 27th December. Half the brigade was detailed to hold in check the enemy cavalry. The rain poured down. For hours they stood watching

the Frenchmen also motionless on their horses. As night drew on, the 43rd and 52nd lay behind a barricade of tree-trunks, carts, and other obstacles, while the 95th pushed on in front and lay out upon the hillside. In driving rain and snow the other half of the brigade laboured at the bridge all day and up till midnight, when two arches were destroyed. Planks were thrown across the broken piers, and silently in single file the troops crossed over. The night was dark and stormy, the roaring river was rising fast, almost up to the level of the planks. At length the perilous journey was done, and the last files heaved the planks into the torrent, the foam of which could be dimly seen through the murk. The remainder of the bridge went up in a sheet of flame, a rumble, and a tremendous roar. Craufurd and his men followed on. They had worked incessantly day and night, soaked through all the time. They were so tired that they could scarcely keep their eyes open.

When the French cavalry found the bridge in ruins 600 of the Imperial Guard swam across at a ford a little way above the bridge. Under the very eyes of the Emperor himself, Lord Paget with the picquets, the 10th Hussars, and a small party of the 3rd German Hussars charged down upon them as they re-formed, and after a few minutes of obstinate fighting drove them back into the river. A trooper of the 10th dashed into the water after a French general, cut him across the head, and brought him in as a prisoner. The trooper was made a sergeant on the spot.

So began the retreat over the mountains to Coruña. The passes were narrow and rugged, swift torrents

were rushing down the tracks. Icy rivers had to be waded in rain and sleet and snow, with piercing winds in great clapping gusts. The men were scrambling through mud or wearing out their shoes on the sharp and slippery roads. Day and night there was boom of cannon and rattle of musketry. Shoeless horses were shot, ammunition wagons were blown up, baggage animals foundered and died. In some of the villages the *posadas* and wine shops were ransacked, and men lying drunk in the streets were abandoned to the enemy. The army hated the retreat. Field officers grumbled, regimental officers neglected their duty, and the losses due to indiscipline were almost as many as those due to hardship, fatigue and the severity of the weather.

The 52nd, benumbed with wet and cold, marched into Benevente after the destruction of the bridge over the Esla, and could not obtain a pint of wine for love or money. A sergcant approached his officer and said that there was some newly bricked up masonry in the local monastery. "That's where they've hidden it, sir." The young officer went at once to the prior, and begged him to sell them some wine. The prior swore by all the saints that he had none. The Englishmen did not believe him. Seizing a great baulk of timber, two privates burst open the suspected store, and found therein a huge vat of wine. The troops were lined up, and under the control of the officers a ration was issued to each man. While this was going on the prior appeared, and jestingly said that he would like a drink before the wine was all gone. A man remarked, "When the wine was yours, you were damned stingy about it.

Now that it's ours, we'll show you what hospitality is. You can have all you want!" So saying, he caught the prior round the waist, and hove him kicking head first into the vat, and he might have been drowned but for the officers.

That such a wrongful action on the part of a private soldier could take place in the presence of his officers shows a curious state of discipline which at certain times was so strictly enforced, especially in such a renowned regiment as the 52nd. The men were undoubtedly rougher and less obedient than those of our modern army, and the young officers were almost wholly untrained. They picked up the art of handling men by instinct and practice, but in the early days of their commission they were not much use save for leading their men in a charge or for setting an example of steadiness under fire.

To escape destruction Moore tried his army to the uttermost. The change from advance to retreat had been sudden. General Craufurd was riding in front of his brigade when a dragoon came spurring furiously along the road to meet him. He delivered a letter to the general, who turned round in his saddle the moment he had read a few lines and thundered out HALT! A few minutes more and the troops were retracing their steps of the night before. Craufurd, like the men, did not love a retreat. Men remarked on his stern face and scowling eye. "Keep your ranks there, men!" he said, spurring his horse towards some riflemen who were avoiding a small rivulet. "Keep your ranks and move on—no straggling from the main body." Craufurd held

them with a firm rein, and day and night the march went on.

On the last day of the year, the light troops under Craufurd were detached from the main body and ordered to make for Vigo, partly in order to guard the flank of the army, and partly to ease the supply situation. Moore did not at this time expect to have to fight before embarkation. If he had foreseen the battle at Coruña, he would probably have kept these excellent troops. A light brigade, composed of the three magnificent regiments, the 43rd, the 52nd and the 95th, had been trained at Shorncliffe Camp by Sir John himself, and he would not lightly have parted with them if there had been any fighting to be done. The Light Brigade had all the hardships of a forced march, but after it had branched off for Vigo, it was free from the main body of the pursuit which laboured along after Moore towards Coruña.

The brigade came to a river, fairly wide though not very deep, which was just as well, since it had to be crossed somehow. Into the water they went, gasping with the cold. Craufurd, as busy as a shepherd with his flock, was riding in and out of the river, to keep his tired men from falling and being drowned as they passed over. To his rage and disgust he came upon an officer, who to save himself from being wet through and from having to wear a damp pair of breeches for the rest of the day, was being carried on the back of one of the men. The general plunged and splashed through the water. "Put him down, man, put him down! Put that officer down instantly!" The soldier, not unwilling, dropped his load into the

river. "Go back, sir," said Craufurd to the officer, "go through the water like the others. I will not allow my officers to ride upon the men's backs through the rivers. All must take their share alike here."

Rifleman Harris is responsible for that story. What he thought of his general is best related in his own words:

"General Craufurd was indeed one of the few men who was apparently created for command during such dreadful scenes as we were familiar with in this retreat. He seemed an iron man; nothing daunted him, nothing turned him from his purpose. War was his very element, and toil and danger seemed to call forth only an increasing determination to surmount them. I was sometimes amused with his appearance and that of the men around us; for, the Rifles being always at his heels, he seemed to think them his familiars. If he stopped his horse, and halted to deliver one of his stern reprimands, you would see half a dozen lean, unshaven, shoeless and savage Riflemen standing for the moment leaning upon their weapons, and scowling up into his face as he scolded; and when he dashed the spurs into his reeking horse, they would throw up their rifles upon their shoulders and hobble after him again. He was sometimes to be seen in the front, then in the rear, and then you might fall in again with him in the midst, dismounted and marching on foot, that the men might see he took an equal share in the toils they were enduring. He had a mortal dislike, I remember, to a commissary. Many a time have I heard him storming at the neglect of



those gentry, when the men were starving for rations, and nothing but excuses forthcoming."

It is related that the commissary of the Light Division complained to Lord Wellington that General Craufurd had threatened to hang him if the supplies for the division were not produced by a certain time. "He threatened to hang you, did he?" replied Wellington. "Then I advise you to produce them, for if General Craufurd said he would hang you, by God he'll do it!" This story is also told of Picton. It may not be true of either of them, but it is quite applicable to both.

The Light Brigade embarked at Vigo without mishap. It is time to turn and follow for a moment the fortunes of the main body, and of the other officers who were to serve under Wellington.

On the 1st January, 1809, Napoleon was at Astorga, with 70,000 infantry, 10,000 horse and 200 guns. The threatening Austrian thundercloud called him eastwards, and he left Soult to drive the islanders into the sea. Moore continued his retreat. Men were dying fast from cold and hunger. Bare-footed, broken by fatigue, they dropped to the rear in scores. Women and children were struggling on through the snow, or lagging behind to certain death in the cold. Up and down the precipitous passes went the redcoats, scrambling up, holding on by their hands with their muskets slung, creeping like snails with their houses on their backs, slipping and sliding on the downward slopes. Tired baggage mules slipped and rolled over and over, breaking their necks or their legs, the baggage crushed, smashed, abandoned. Behind the army was a ghastly

litter of broken carts, dead animals, dying men, muskets, packs, worn out shoes, rags.

At Lugo, Moore turned and offered battle. Instantly the morale of the troops was regained as if by magic. But it was lucky his offer was not accepted, for he could only fight once. There was no reserve of men, ammunition or food. The retreat was resumed. Coruña was in sight, and like Xenophon's ten thousand, the British saw the sea. But it was empty! Contrary winds held up the transports at Vigo, and there was nothing to do but fight. On the 16th January, Moore's sorely tried men beat back the French and gained time for the embarkation, the fleet having arrived. Moore was mortally wounded. Sir David Baird was also hit, and Hope took command. He successfully covered the embarkation and was the last man to go aboard. Hill and Beresford each had brigades in this action. Hill was in reserve on the promontory at the rear of the town, Beresford was in charge of the rearguard stationed in front of Coruña, and Edward Paget, brother of Lord Paget, was posted on the right to guard against an outflanking movement by the French cavalry. The bulk of the army embarked on the 17th in chilly misty weather without the enemy being aware of it. Hill's brigade went next, and after dark, Beresford's. Hope was made a Knight Commander of the Bath for this day's work.

That gallant and gifted soldier, Sir John Moore, was buried on the rampart of the citadel of Coruña, "with his martial cloak around him." One of his last questions before he died was, "Are Colonel Graham and my aides-de-camp all safe?" Graham of Balgowan

stood by the grave at the last. He said, "Never fell a more perfect soldier and gentleman." After embarkation Graham suffered much from ophthalmia, brought on by splinters of stones from a shot striking his right eye. This affliction was to be a trouble to him all his life.

The three brothers Napier, all Wellington's men, took part in this famous retreat. Major Charles James Napier, the future conqueror of Scind, was wounded in five places at Coruña. He was cut off, stabbed, and almost killed when lying wounded, by a ruffianly Frenchman. A French drummer rescued him. The day after the battle Marshal Soult heard of Napier, had him placed in good quarters, and himself wrote to the Emperor asking that his prisoner should not be sent to France, where he would languish unexchanged for the duration of the war. When Soult in a few days handed him over to Ney, the latter continued to treat Napier with the greatest consideration. Eventually he was sent to England on condition that he should not serve again until regularly exchanged. In 1809 he was twenty-seven years of age. George Napier of the 52nd was two years Charles's junior, and was one of Moore's aides-de-camp. He was living down a rather wild youth spent in an Irish dragoon regiment. William Napier, painter, sculptor and historian of the Peninsular War, was a captain in the 43rd, and was with the Light Brigade in their march to Vigo.

More than once on this retreat the men got out of hand and pillaged the wine shops, and there were terrible scenes. When roaring fighting drunk, man is

lower than the beasts. After the first incident Sir John Moore addressed the troops with feeling, and rebuked them for their infamous conduct. Yet it happened again. General Edward Paget's division was involved with the others. Paget, it will be remembered, had commanded the 28th Regiment when it fought back to back in Egypt. The division was formed in hollow square for a drumhead court-martial. Hour after hour the arrested defaulters were flogged in front of the parade. Two men had committed a worse crime than drunkenness. They had been caught robbing civilians. Ropes were placed round their necks and fastened to the branches of a tree, while the men were held up on the shoulders of the provost-marshal's assistants, who had only to walk away for the execution to be carried into effect. Paget stood silent. Then he burst out: "My God! To think that instead of preparing to meet the enemy, I am preparing to hang two robbers!" He paused. The British picquets were heard retiring. The general again spoke. "If I spare the lives of these two men, will you promise on your word of honour as soldiers that you will cease this behaviour?" Not a sound came from the weary sullen men in square. Paget repeated his question. Still there was silence, till some officers whispered, "Say yes." The word "Yes" then flew round the square. The ropes were loosed, and as the troops gave the customary cheer for a reprieve, over the hill came the rearguard picquets engaged with the enemy's advanced guard. The square formed quarter column, and the division retired across a stream.

Lieutenant Robert Blakeney, who tells this story,

seems to have been very impressed by Paget. He says of him: "When that officer gave an order there was something peculiar in his glance, impressive in his tone of voice, and decisive in his manner. . . . The order was clear. The execution must be prompt."

The fleet of transports bearing Moore's army sailed direct for England. A terrible storm arose and scattered the ships up and down the Channel from Land's End to Dover. All along the southern coasts of England, gangs of dirty, ragged, bearded, haggard men appeared, half starved and sick with fever. The sight startled the good folk at home, who had never seen soldiers as they really are in battle, and somehow always thought of them as dressed for parade. Pity stirred their hearts as they began to realise in some small way the horror and ugliness of war.

## VI

### *The Tide of War*

THE NAMES OF Wellington's generals are not so familiar in England as are those of Napoleon's marshals, such as Ney, Soult, Masséna, and the rest. Why this is so is not altogether clear, for Wellington and his lieutenants surely won undying renown. They beat Napoleon and his Frenchmen handsomely enough. It is true that Napoleon's men were more picturesque and flamboyant figures, and that Wellington's people operated in a comparatively restricted area, whereas the marshals of France won fame all over Europe. Though Wellington never lost a battle, like all other generals he sometimes made mistakes, and on more than one occasion defeat was very near. To and fro swayed the tide of war. Advance was followed by retreat, advance again and retreat once more. The wonderful marching infantry tramped thousands of miles, into Spain, back to Portugal, forwards to Spain and again to Portugal. Then right across the Peninsula to the Pyrenees swung the British legions, and down the passes into France at last.

After Coruña, Napoleon ordered the French army in Spain to reoccupy Portugal. The French had in Spain nearly a quarter of a million men under arms with their regiments, besides a large force on the lines of communication. Victor was to press on into Portugal, south of the Tagus, Ney was to hold Galicia,

and Soult was to march on Lisbon by way of Oporto. Soult stormed and took Oporto, and the Spanish and Portuguese armies were everywhere defeated again and again.

Sir Arthur Wellesley was sent out to take supreme command in Portugal, with large drafts of fresh troops to reinforce the British army covering Lisbon. Colin Campbell was still his A.D.C. He left with Sir Arthur in the *Surveillante* frigate from Portsmouth after a week of waiting due to foul weather. When the ship did at last weigh anchor, she ran almost immediately into a very severe storm. She was so badly buffeted by the waves that the captain almost gave up hope of saving her. Campbell went down to Wellesley's cabin, and found him calmly sleeping. Campbell shook him awake. "Put on your boots, sir, and come on deck, we are likely to go to the bottom." "Boots be damned," said Sir Arthur. "I can swim better without them. Besides, there is a deal too much commotion on deck already." The general was fated to die in his bed ashore, and on the 22nd of April, 1809, the *Surveillante* crept into Lisbon safe and sound.

General Hill landed with 5,000 men and 300 artillery horses. With these the total strength of Wellesley's army was slightly more than 25,000 men, including 9,000 Portuguese, who at that period were not of much use, and about 3,000 excellent German troops. These formed part of the King's German Legion, founded in 1803 with soldiers recruited from the Electorate of Hanover, from which house had come the Kings of England. They were a fine body of men under first-class officers. By 1805 there were five regiments of

cavalry, ten battalions of infantry, and six batteries of guns, 14,000 men in all. Two brigades of their infantry, with two brigades of Guards, formed the First Division of the British Army. As the war went on, the quality of the K.G.L. tended to deteriorate. Communication with Hanover was cut off, and recruitment was made from the thousands of Napoleon's German troops in English prison camps. Later still Poles and indeed any foreigners were accepted.

As the white sails of the British ships appeared on the blue winding waters of the Tagus, Hill and the rest saw a country very different from the green misty fields of home. There were two forts on either side, a mile apart, with a tumbling sea over the bar, and dark mountains, wild and arid and bare. Almost all the officers who have left memoirs and diaries speak of the filthy stinking state of the Lisbon streets. All refuse was pitched out of window and there were no scavengers. One remarks that it was lucky the streets were very steep, so that the rain could flush them down occasionally.

Beresford was under Wellesley's orders. He had the Portuguese under his special care, for he had been appointed to reorganise that army. His troops were stationed between the Tagus and the Mondego. The material he had to fashion into shape was excellent, particularly the peasantry of the northern provinces. They were strong, handsome and brave, intelligent but excitable. Beresford's appointment was partly due to Parliamentary influence, but also to the fact that he had been Governor of Madeira and could speak Portuguese. He was made a lieutenant-general



in the British Army, and a field-marshal and commander-in-chief in the Portuguese. This promotion lifted him over the heads of many British officers senior to him, and caused much jealousy and ill-feeling. Beresford arrived at Lisbon at the beginning of March, 1809. He collected masses of soldiery, reorganising them on the model of the British forces, carrying through a rigorous reform that, as Napier says, raised out of chaos an obedient, well-disciplined and gallant army, equal to any in Europe. But it took time. The Portuguese troops were neglected by an inefficient Government, and Beresford had to work hard to get them properly fed, clothed and paid. At first discipline hardly existed at all. The officers were mostly old and useless, mean, petty and ignorant, often worse than the men, drinking and gambling with them in cabarets. Beresford made it a condition that he should have a free hand to cashier or promote, and to introduce British officers into the army. The incapable but influential Portuguese officers had to go, and younger men or British took their places. Deserters and looters were shot, and it was quickly realised that there was a firm hand on the controls. There was a court-martial and the lash for any unsoldierly conduct. Beresford was fair and impartial, and his severity was therefore effective. His left eye, sightless owing to a shooting accident when a young man, used to terrify Portuguese officers and soldiers when brought before him for military offences.

In the spring of 1810 the army was in fine condition. Beresford was full of zeal and his Irish temper was hot, but Major Warre, his aide-de-camp, said of him



LIEUT-GENERAL LORD BERESFORD, K.B.



that he was firm, persevering and patient. So indeed he must have been to have got such good results in so short a time. Wellington did not think much of him as a general in the field, but he had a high opinion of his ability as an administrator. "He alone could feed an army," said his commander-in-chief.

Soult was at Oporto, but Victor was in the Tagus valley and Ney away to the north-west of Spain. Wellesley determined to march against Soult. The former had three weak infantry divisions and one of cavalry. Edward Paget, Sherbrooke and Rowland Hill were the infantry commanders. In three and a half days their men marched eighty miles over rough stony roads. Then by a daring stroke Wellesley flung them across the Douro, forced Soult over the frontier into Galicia, and turned to deal with Victor.

The morning of the 12th May broke calm and still. As the sun rose higher the mist rolled away from the broad and shining Douro, and revealed to the watchers on the British side the roofs of Oporto, and the outposts of the French army, ten thousand veteran soldiers, guarding the deep swift river, three hundred yards wide. No large body of troops were seen near the river bank, but out along the Vallonga Road arose the dust of marching men. The British columns were massed under cover of a hill on which stood a convent, used by Wellesley as his headquarters. His searching eyes rested upon a large unfinished building known as the Seminary, standing alone quite close to the opposite bank, with a high stone wall enclosing an area big enough for two battalions to parade. The wall surrounded the seminary and came down to the

water's edge on either side. The passage across to this building was hidden from the French troops in the town by a bend in the river. Here was the key to Oporto. How to get boats?

The answer quickly came. Colonel Waters, who was, like Colquhoun Grant, one of the Chief's most trusted Intelligence officers, was prowling along the bank in the early morning, and discovered a small skiff in which a barber had crossed the river during the night. He commandeered the skiff and the barber, and accompanied by the prior of a neighbouring religious house, who bravely offered his services, crossed over and brought back unseen three large barges. While all this was going on, twenty guns were brought up to the convent, and General John Murray was sent with a brigade of Germans, a few dragoons and two guns to a point three miles higher up, with orders to look for boats and to cross somehow. As soon as the first barge was brought by Waters along to the crossing-place, the fact was reported to Wellesley. "Let the men cross," he said.

An officer and twenty-five men of the Buffs scrambled into the boat, and in a quarter of an hour were in possession of the seminary. Two more barges crossed. Then they were discovered. Drums beat in the town, shouts and cries arose, troops came pouring out and opened fire. Edward Paget was in the third boat, and was severely wounded as soon as he reached the seminary. He lost his arm, but won a G.C.B. Rowland Hill then appeared and took command. A sharp fight ensued. Citizens pushed over in large boats, Sherbrooke began to cross. Hill had by this

time three battalions in the seminary and directed a hot fire on to the French columns on the Vallonga Road. Murray had crossed and was coming up on the farther bank. The French were in retreat, and Murray had a great opportunity of turning the retreat into a rout, but unfortunately he was timid and inactive. Soult escaped into the mountains and over the frontier. It was 1813 before Wellington could rid himself of Murray. As a soldier he was not a success.

Marshal Victor, Duke of Belluno, had reached Talavera on the Tagus, supported by King Joseph Bonaparte and Marshal Jourdain. Wellesley was in camp at Abrantes on the Tagus in Portugal. Though he longed to move he could not. His soldiers were on starvation rations, without proper shoes or pay. There was insufficient transport, no money, and the hospitals were full to overflowing with sick and wounded. It was not until the end of June that Wellesley heard that there were 8,000 fresh troops about to disembark at Lisbon, and that the Spanish general Cuesta with many thousands of well-equipped Spaniards had marched eastwards towards Talavera. He would delay no longer, and advanced into Spain to meet Victor. The hungry British troops marched gamely on. The weather was very hot and the roads shocking. Villages were deserted and in ruins, even the cornfields were often burnt. The French had laid waste the whole countryside. The devastation made a great impression on some of Wellington's officers. For example, Major Warre exclaims, "May our beloved country never be a scene of warfare! Better half of its men should die on the beach." And another officer

prays: "May England ever fight her battles in a foreign land!" Long marches, little food and that bad, worse water, burning sun by day, and sleep at night on damp dewy ground, caused much sickness. The men were reduced to filling their haversacks with ears of corn where they could find them, and boiling the grain at the end of the day.

Cuesta was for attacking, and attack he did, on his own account, with the result that he was badly beaten. Then the French crossed the river Alberche, which runs into the Tagus near Talavera. Wellesley stationed the Spaniards close to the town in an apparently impregnable position guarded by ditches, breastworks and felled trees. After the defeat they had experienced, they were still about 33,000 strong with 70 guns. The British line was prolonged for about two miles to the left, with General Hill on the extreme left, his flank covered by a height. The British troops numbered only 19,000, largely young and inexperienced soldiers. Victor and his colleagues had at their disposal nearly 50,000 men, the heroes of Austerlitz and Jena, including 7,000 cavalry. A division of these veterans moved up against the Spanish. The defenders of the impregnable position fired a volley, then turned and ran. The bulk of the runaways were soon twenty miles behind the lines. The allies were utterly defeated, they said, the French are upon us. The commissaries made off with their scanty transport, the baggage scattered, and certain British officers in the rear lost their heads also. Wellesley immediately reinforced his right, while Cuesta and a remnant of the Spaniards rallied. The French were checked.

The hill on the left of the line was the danger point. It was only held by a brigade, and Victor decided to assault it in force. He looked like succeeding but Hill reinforced with his main body. Hill's horse was shot, and after fighting hand to hand he ran to the head of the 29th Regiment. As it grew dark he led them in a fierce counter-attack, and with a long-drawn cheer the redcoats drove the enemy off the height. Night fell, and on both sides the bivouac fires twinkled and glimmered.

Dawn broke red behind the enemy on the 28th July. Again Hill on his height was vehemently assailed. The British and French fought it out with the bayonet, and in the end the former held their ground. Followed a pause from nine o'clock till midday. The sun was fierce. A few ounces of wheat in the grain made up all the haversack ration of the hungry British soldiers, and for water they descended in parties to the brook running between the lines. The French did the same. It was a curious spectacle. At one o'clock the drums began to roll, and the battle began again. The first division (Guards and K.G.L.) attacked hotly and went too far. They were beaten back, and the British centre was broken. But Wellesley's watchful eye saw the Guards' impetuosity, and foreseeing what would happen, he ordered Colonel Donnellan of the 48th and Stapleton Cotton with the light cavalry to go to their assistance. This manœuvre was the turning point of the battle. The 48th wheeled back by companies and let the retiring troops through. Then the regiment "resuming its proud and beautiful line, marched against the right of the pursuing columns." With



their steady fire they arrested the enemy's advance. The Guards and Germans rallied. Cotton's cavalry came trotting up. The French began to hesitate. A cheer from the British took on a new note, the note of victory, and the French began to fall back over the Alberche. The weary empty British could not pursue.

The scene of the battlefield was terrible. The long grass took fire during the action, and added dreadfully to the sufferings of the wounded of both armies. Their cries for help were horrifying, and hundreds were seen exerting the last ounce of their strength and crawling to places of safety. Spanish civilians had to be forcibly prevented from butchering the wounded Frenchmen and stripping them naked. Clouds of flies were everywhere, in fact during the summer campaigns they were an intolerable nuisance. They pestered the men and animals unceasingly, they blackened the food and drowned themselves in the drink.

Robert Craufurd arrived too late for the battle, to his great annoyance. He and his men had done their best. He had with him the pick of the army, the noble Light Brigade, the 43rd, 52nd and the 1st/95th, the "dashing Rifles." They had been delayed by bad weather at sea, taking over a month to reach Lisbon from Dover. They had had a fine send-off, with crowds of cheering men and women to wish them God-speed as they embarked. Nine or ten transports were at anchor in the Downs, and Major-General Craufurd went aboard the escorting frigate, *Nymph*, 44 guns. Followed a week of storms. They then stood down the Channel, being held up again at Cowes by an adverse wind and squalls. It was a fortnight before

they sailed away from the Isle of Wight, and another week ere they weathered Cape Finisterre. A few days later, on the 28th June, 1809, they came to anchor at Lisbon. It may be presumed that this was an average passage, for transports often took much longer.

From here it may be interesting to follow for a moment the fortunes of Lieutenant George Simmons, a young officer of the 95th, who had been mentioned before. The brigade remained on board for four days, awaiting orders, and when these came, the troops crowded into flat-bottomed boats and sailed with the tide up the Tagus. The wind shifting to an unfavourable quarter, officers and men had to take a turn at the oars. They were a night and a day on this trip, landing eventually at a small village at dusk, hungry, cold and wet. Here they lay down in their greatcoats on the ground soaked with the dew, and tried to sleep. When they reached Santarem, where the whole of the Light Brigade assembled, they waited for the baggage animals that had been bought in Lisbon. The town was surrounded by hills covered with olive groves. The civil population did a good trade, for the troops bought wine and grapes and oranges. Simmons found a billet at a blacksmith's, where he was well treated. One day Lieutenant Macleod and he were in charge of a guard at a religious house. A monk came downstairs and beckoned to them to go up. In the refectory was a number of the brotherhood, all hospitable and jolly, and on the table rich food, fruit and excellent wine. Simmons enjoyed himself. On another occasion he amused himself by calling at a nunnery and "chatting with the girls through the grating."

The brigade was soon on the march, and day after day the troops tramped up the Tagus valley, noting the storks on the house-tops, and the wild romantic country. The heat was so great that they lost some men through sunstroke. Craufurd therefore altered the hours of march to the early morning, from two a.m. till eleven. They crossed the frontier in due time, and were in bivouac at Malpartida after a twenty-mile march, when news came to Craufurd of Wellesley's movements. Soon, too soon, the bugles blew. The brigade was on the road again for Talavera with their full packs upon their backs. This march is historic. Whether it was the enormous figure of 62 miles in 26 hours as Napier says, or 43 in the same time as Professor Oman avers, or whether Simmons (who took part in it) is correct in saying it was 52 miles in 24 hours matters little, for in any event it was a remarkable feat under the conditions. One evening they had halted by a pool of stagnant water, where cattle had been watered and in which they had wallowed. Officers and soldiers rushed for this muddy water and drank it eagerly. They had marched the whole day without anything to drink under an almost intolerable sun. During the long forced march Simmons only had bad water like this and six ounces of mouldy bread. The brigade left but seventeen stragglers behind, though the men were more than half starved. As they drew nearer to the battlefield they met the dusty remnants of the Spanish army. "The whole army is on the run." "The English general's dead." "The French are just over the hill." Heartily cursing the runaways, Craufurd and his Light Brigade pushed

on all the harder, and reached Talavera, weary, but stepping out proudly, well closed up, and ready to fight. Fighting was not required of them, but a task much more disagreeable, that of collecting dead bodies, piling them in heaps, and burning them with faggots. Owing to the heat, the stench was terrible.

Cuesta seems to have been an inhuman monster. He proceeded to decimate the regiments in his army that had run away by adopting the old Roman practice of executing one man in every ten. Fifty men were killed in this way before Wellesley could prevail upon him to cease from such barbarity. Not only this, but he and the local population refused provisions or any help whatever for the British wounded. From this time forth the British troops despised and hated the Spaniards. This feeling was unfortunate, for the Spaniards were by no means always so callous, and if they had been well-led and trained would have fought well. As for Cuesta, a British officer described him as a "deformed-looking lump of pride, ignorance and treachery. He was the most murderous-looking old man I ever saw."

Wellesley went back to Oropesa in order to bring Soult to action. Cuesta was left in Talavera to cover the evacuation of the British wounded, but he marched away with Victor at his heels, leaving them to the mercy of the French. It must be recorded that the French showed the wounded the greatest consideration and did all they could for them. War is so ugly a business that courtesy and humanity shine out, and it is a relief to note the chivalry displayed by both British and French in their dealings with each other.

There were many such courtesies. Wellington frequently wrote in French to his opponent regarding the exchange or care of individual officer prisoners.

Soult had been heavily reinforced and his troops now outnumbered the British by three to one. Owing to Cuesta's defection, Wellington was in danger of being caught between Victor and Soult. He therefore re-crossed the Tagus and went back to Portugal. Though the French had been beaten in battle, their strength and the conduct of the Spaniards gave them the advantage in the campaign. The British losses had been heavy, their allies had played them false, they were marching away from the enemy, they were depressed and underfed, dysentery and typhus were killing more than had perished in battle. The Commander-in-Chief and his officers had a hard task in front of them.

During this unhappy retreat Simmons records an encounter with Craufurd which does something to explain why that extraordinary man was so unpopular with officers both senior and junior to him. Simmons says that he was in charge of a guard over certain defaulters, with orders to pick up stragglers and to see no baggage was left upon the road. The only baggage he could see was General Craufurd's light cart loaded with wine and provisions. The mules which were supposed to be drawing it had refused to budge. Simmons cajoled them and whacked them to no effect. At last a soldier of the guard volunteered to mount the leading mule. Then the animals were beaten with rifle slings. Away they went with a rush. The man fell off. They dashed down a steep

hill and piled up with a crash at the bottom. The cart was knocked to bits, and the mules were hurt. At the end of the day's march Simmons went to report the catastrophe to the general, who flew into one of his fits of rage.

"Turn out the drummers," he stormed. "March up the defaulters to their regiments and have them flogged on parade."

Simmons was "highly indignant" at being treated like a provost-marshal, and went straight to his colonel with his story. Colonel Beckwith was a sensible man. He reprimanded the stragglers for having left the line of march, telling them to rejoin their regiments and not to do it again. He took the responsibility off Simmon's shoulders. Nothing more was heard of the business, but Simmons says that Craufurd never forgave him.

The army headquarters were at Badajoz, but the Light Brigade was for three months in billets at Campo Mayor near by, a pestilential place. The whole area seemed unhealthy and many died. The Light Brigade, or Light Division, as it soon became, was destined in the next few months to add greatly to its reputation under its erratic leader, Robert Craufurd. Despite his many grave faults, he had that touch of genius which is uncommonly rare. Napier's summary of his character may perhaps be a little extreme, but it is interesting to see how one of his own officers regarded him. Napier says: "At one time he was all fire and intelligence, a master-spirit of war; at another, he would madly rush from blunder to blunder, raging in folly."

## VII

### *Secret Fortress*

THE PASSAGE OF the Douro was an example of the audacity that marks Wellington out as a very great commander. It would have been a disaster for Britain if a stray bullet or a roving cannon-ball had struck him down, for it is doubtful whether among his officers there was one who could have stepped into his place. It is true that the opportunity makes the man, and that it is hard to say that any one is indispensable, but broadly speaking Wellington's general officers seem to have been, in the absence of the opportunity to prove themselves otherwise, good soldiers rather than great captains. However, there is no doubt that Wellington had a good team to support him. Among this team the best known and perhaps the most picturesque character was Thomas Picton.

Picton was a Welsh country gentleman, born in Pembrokeshire in the year 1758. He came from an old county family, but possessed little or no influence with which to make his way up the Army ladder. He obtained his first step by purchase. Gazetted an ensign when thirteen years old, he was a captain in the 75th by the time he was twenty. For five years he was stationed at Gibraltar. Garrison duty was tedious, and in the hope of advancing himself in his profession he set himself to learn to speak French

and Spanish. With the peace of 1783 the axe fell. The army was drastically reduced, and regiments were disbanded, a move that was highly unpopular with all ranks. It meant throwing poor men out to starve. The 75th was at Bristol at the time of this order for disbandment, and Captain Picton was the officer in charge. The men were assembled in College Green, and were openly mutinous. They swore that they would not give up their arms or obey their officers. Picton, fearless and prompt, dashed into the ranks, collared the leader and spokesman, dragged him out and put him under arrest. He let loose on the men a torrent of angry speech, and such was the force of his personality that they submitted quietly. Picton was well over six feet in height, with a strong frame and athletic figure. In repose his face was stern and not very likeable, but it was sometimes lit up by a frank and pleasant smile. His hair wandered untidily over his face. He was always an untidy person.

The officers also felt the force of the economy axe. For Picton it meant years of inactivity on half-pay. Having no influence or "pull," he could get no appointment or employment, even when war broke out again in 1793. He knew, very slightly, Sir John Vaughan, who was the senior officer commanding in the West Indies, and in desperation he sailed thither unattached in the hope of something turning up. Sir John made him his aide-de-camp. The French and Spanish islands were attacked by Sir Ralph Abercromby, and Picton served under him at the taking of Trinidad. In 1797, Picton, by this time a brevet colonel, was appointed Governor of the island. He acted energetically as he



always did, making roads, and with naval support opening up fresh channels for trade. His measures in this connection aroused the anger of the Spanish authorities on the Main. The Governors of Caracas and Guiana offered 20,000 dollars for Picton's head. Picton wrote to them both as follows:

"Port of Spain,  
25th January, 1799.

"SIR,—I understand your Excellency has done me the honour of valuing my head at twenty thousand dollars. I am sorry it is not in my power to return the compliment. Modesty obliges me to remark that your Excellency has far over-rated the trifle: but, as it has found means to recommend itself to your Excellency's attention, if you will give yourself the trouble of coming to take it, it will be much at your service.

Your Excellency's very devoted  
humble servant,

THOMAS PICTON."

The letter is a good example of the somewhat ponderous humour of the late eighteenth century.

Picton had a hard task in Trinidad. The island was full of ruffians of all kinds, disbanded Spanish soldiers, runaway negroes and pirates. Picton endeavoured to restore some sort of order by a free use of the pillory, lash and rope. To some considerable extent he succeeded, at least to the satisfaction of the well-to-do responsible members of the Spanish population. Spanish law still ruled in Trinidad. The English as yet had made no alteration in this respect, a fact that

got Picton into grave trouble. A mulatto girl was arrested for suspected complicity in a robbery. In accordance with Spanish law the magistrates stood her with her heels on a short stake or picket with a blunted point, in order to make her confess all she knew. Picton was not ignorant of this proceeding, and made no attempt to stop it. On the contrary, he appears to have sanctioned it. Public opinion in England was less sensitive than it is to-day, but even so the allegation that a woman had been tortured to draw out a confession naturally caused an outcry at home. Picton resigned in spite of the protests of the inhabitants. He was prosecuted, but after two long-drawn-out trials and inquiries which lasted four years he was acquitted on the ground that the local laws had not been broken.

During the course of the prosecution Picton was one day dining at the Grosvenor Coffee House when a friend of his, a Colonel Darling, joined him.

"Picton," he said, "I have just left the Duke of Queensberry and he has charged me with a message for you."

"Indeed," replied Picton, "I am much honoured, the more so as I have never had the pleasure of being introduced to him."

"The Duke<sup>1</sup> has watched the whole course of your prosecution with great interest," went on Darling, "and he is entirely convinced of your innocence. He is aware of the great expenses you must incur, and offers you the use of the sum of £10,000."

<sup>1</sup> A well-known character, nicknamed "Old Q." He was a great supporter of the Tuif and the Opera, but hardly a pattern of moral rectitude.

Picton was of course pleased at this mark of confidence, but as his uncle had paid his expenses, he did not avail himself of the gift. This was not the only contribution to his defence. After he had left Trinidad, the principal inhabitants sent him a sword and a donation of £4,000. Soon after there was a terrible fire in Port of Spain. Picton returned the money as his contribution to a relief fund.

In 1803, Napoleon's Boulogne flotilla menaced England's gate, and volunteer corps sprang up everywhere. Picton laid before the War Office some far-sighted proposals for national defence. He advocated a conscription by classes in times of need, with lightly armed irregulars, and permanent depots of trained men for regular drafts. His scheme, which was drawn up with great care and detail, was not adopted, and he languished on half-pay till 1808 when he was promoted to be major-general. He took part in the disastrous Walcheren expedition of 1809, from which no glory nor honour could be got. This was one of the last "side-shows" staged by the British Government, perhaps the most ambitious enterprise that had ever left England's shores. A great fleet with 40,000 troops sailed to fight the French in Belgium. What would Wellington have given for 40,000 men! The Earl of Chatham, brother of William Pitt, was in supreme command. Men said that he was financially embarrassed, and that a well-paid job like this would help to keep him out of bankruptcy. The country had to pay heavily in life and health for his incompetence. Chatham sailed in July and withdrew in September with the bulk of the army, having accom-

plished nothing. Picton's brigade was part of the considerable force left behind on Walcheren Island. Half the men died of fever, and most of the rest including Picton himself were very ill. Picton retired to Bath to take the cure when he reached home.

It took a long time to live down the slur cast upon his name by the incident at Trinidad. Wellington did not care. He could be ruthless himself at times, and he knew Picton was a bonny fighter. Wellington asked for him as a divisional commander, and Picton led the Third Division for four strenuous years. There was a prejudice against him at first, but as a soldier he did not act the tyrant. He was stern and severe, vehement in speech, and strong-willed, but if not loved, "Old Picton" was at least admired by his troops. They did not mind his rough tongue as a rule, but once in a while he went too far. The 88th Regiment (Connaught Rangers) was in his division. Two privates of the regiment had stolen a goat. After a drum-head court-martial had been held and punishment inflicted, he addressed the 88th, and told them that the army called them not the Connaught Rangers but the Connaught Footpads, and added a few sneering words about their country and their religion. Colonel Wallace, the officer commanding the 88th, formally protested, was invited to dinner, and received an expression of regret. But the Irish never forgive. Even when peace came and the division was presenting an address and plate to their general, the 88th refused to subscribe.

However, after the storming of Ciudad Rodrigo, some of the 88th called out from the ranks, "Well,

general, we gave you a cheer the other night, it's your turn now." Picton smiled, took off his hat and shouted, "Here then, you drunken set of brave rascals, hurrah! And we'll soon be at Badajoz!"

On the whole Picton was considered by his men to be fair. He was very accessible to all ranks and would always try to see justice done. He was a master of abuse. Heading a charge, he shouted, "Come on, you plundering fighting blackguards!" Wellington summed him up: "a rough foul-mouthed devil as ever lived, but he always behaved extremely well on service."

Wellington, now on the defensive, took up two main positions with his Anglo-Portuguese army. He kept under his own immediate command the troops on the Mondego, and left General Hill on the Tagus. Meanwhile he prepared his great surprise, the secret fortress, the famous Lines of Torres Vedras. Craufurd, with his Light Brigade now become the Light Division, was pushed forward to the Agueda to watch Masséna, with Picton's Third Division in support. Craufurd had the 43rd, 52nd, a battalion of the 95th (Rifles), two battalions of Portuguese Caçadores (light troops), Captain Ross's splendid troop of Royal Horse Artillery, and 400 of the 1st German Hussars. All the other divisions had Portuguese troops attached, in most cases a brigade of four battalions with a fifth battalion of Caçadores. Craufurd arrived on the Agueda in January, 1810. The country was wild and stony, and wolves howled in the night.

In March, General Férey tried to surprise the Light Division in a night attack by 600 grenadiers on the

bridge of Barba del Puerco over the Agueda. The river here roars over its rocks in a deep gorge, and at the bottom of a zigzag path lies the bridge a hundred yards long. A company of the 95th was posted to guard the bridge, but the night was dark and stormy, the rain lashed down, and the rushing river made such a din that the French crept up unheard, overpowered the advanced posts on the bridge, and scrambled up the path. The company of Riflemen fought among the rocks for half an hour against great odds, till Colonel Sydney Beckwith arrived with three reserve companies. With a furious shout the Rifles hustled the French down the hill and back across the river. Craufurd was very pleased with the conduct of Sydney Beckwith and his men in this affair. Kincaid, Beckwith's adjutant, says of him that he was "a father as well as a leader." By the fitful light of the moon Beckwith saw a French soldier within a few feet of him, taking deliberate aim at his head. Flinging a stone at the *poilu*, he shouted, "Get out of that, you scoundrel!" Beckwith so put the fellow off his aim that only his hat was shot off.

For five months Craufurd remained on this outpost duty on the Agueda, many miles in front of the army on the north-east frontier of Portugal. During this time he protected the army and denied to Masséna any knowledge of its movements and of what was going on round Lisbon. Masséna had a great screen of thousands of cavalry, and 40,000 infantry behind it. Craufurd had to watch fifteen fords on the Agueda River. His forward observation posts were carefully sited, and the information was conveyed back to him so promptly

that the Light Division could fight or withdraw long before it could be attacked. At any moment the troops could be under arms in seven minutes after an alarm, and within a quarter of an hour could be at their battle posts with their baggage loaded. Each morning a report was made of every ford on the Agueda, and warning beacons were ready to be lighted on the heights. The 1st Hussars of the King's German Legion was the crack corps of the Army's light scouting cavalry. Craufurd knew German well and was in personal touch with every squadron commander.

Craufurd's men did not take off their shoes for weeks together, and by lying out in all weathers their clothes were in rags. One officer says: "The other day I was posted on a bleak rock from four o'clock in the morning till one after noon before I was relieved, and got famously ducked; but I derived this advantage—it gave me a keen appetite for my breakfast, which my servant has provided for me in style—four eggs, roast fowl, and plenty of tea. We have no certainty as to meals, sometimes we dine at two o'clock, and other times at ten at night. In our company we have three mules and an ass to carry our provisions and wine, which, when we move about, we carry in deer skins.

"This day I marched four leagues under a continuous torrent of rain. I am now under tolerable shelter, sitting drying my trousers over a fire of wood upon the ground, and am in a very ill humour, having burnt the leather which encircles the bottoms. I have my jacket off and a blanket round me until my jacket and shirt are dried."

Masséna had invested Ciudad Rodrigo for many

weeks, and at last, on July 10, the Spanish garrison capitulated, after a gallant defence. Henceforward Portugal was threatened. Marshal Ney with 25,000 men moved to attack Craufurd. Here Craufurd made the great mistake of his career. He elected to fight Ney with the river Coa behind him instead of retiring behind it and refusing battle. As it was, he had to effect a fighting retreat across the bridge. The banks were tremendously steep, and the road to the bridge narrow and stony. If the very heavy rains had not filled the river and drowned the fords, Craufurd would have been cut off and would have lost his division. By fighting he disobeyed Wellington's orders, which were precise and clear. "Don't fight beyond the Coa." Wellington did not want a general engagement against great odds. Time was on his side. Day by day the discipline and equipment of the Portuguese were improving, and the strength of the British Army was increased.

Soon after daybreak, Marshal Ney advanced to drive Craufurd into the Coa. Craufurd had his infantry in line among rocky ground and stone walls, his left a few hundred yards from Almeida, which was garrisoned by the Portuguese and was still holding out. His right was drawn back towards the Coa. The baggage, guns, cavalry and the two battalions of Portuguese were ordered to cross the bridge at once, while the 43rd, 52nd and 95th firmly contested the ground. The road, running through a narrow difficult defile to the bridge, was quickly choked with men and horses, and a situation of great peril arose. The whole plain in front of the defile was covered



with the French horse and foot. Drums were beating, French officers were running forward with their hats upon their swords, crying, "*En avant, enfants de la patrie!*" Beaten back, they came on again. Parties of their hussars in bearskin caps and white pelisses established themselves among the rocks and walls. The steadiness and discipline of this superb division still held. The British began to retire by companies. A detachment of the 95th, which was occupying a hillock that commanded the bridge, was ordered (Simmons says by Craufurd)<sup>1</sup> to evacuate it before half of the 52nd had filed over the bridge. The enemy instantly took possession of the height, and fired upon the troops hurrying across. A young officer of the 43rd, named McLeod, at once called to the troops on the bridge to follow him, and waving his cap rode shouting for the hill. A crowd of cheering soldiers, including Beckwith with some of the 95th, charged after him. The suddenness and vigour of the attack took the French by surprise. They were hustled off the hill, and the 52nd crossed undisturbed.

The whole division was across, the bridge was swept by its fire. A drum began to roll. A French officer in a gorgeous uniform and a drummer appeared at the head of a column of grenadiers. With his sword in air, "*Vive l'Empereur!*" he cried. "*En avant, mes enfants!*" They rushed for the long bridge and ran on cheering. The watching British let them come two-thirds of the way over, then gave them a volley. The column crumbled into ruin. Three times they bravely advanced, three times they were all shot down. The fight petered

<sup>1</sup> Probably a misunderstanding.

out in a tremendous downpour of rain, and Craufurd fell back farther, behind the Pinhel river.

Thus the fighting qualities of the soldiers he had trained saved Craufurd from defeat, but the loss was heavy, the price paid great. Picton with his Third Division was at Pinhel, away in the rear, but in spite of the fact that he was there to support Craufurd in case of need, he did not move. The exact circumstances are in dispute. Picton has been blamed. His apologists assert that he knew nothing about the battle till it was over. On the other hand there is some evidence that he and Craufurd met and that help was refused. *If this is the fact, Picton may possibly have had in mind Wellington's orders against a general engagement.* The only thing known for certain about Picton's relations with Craufurd is his not necessarily unfriendly remark, "That damned fighting fellow Craufurd will some day get us into a scrape." There was always a rivalry between their two splendid divisions. On at least one occasion the Light Division loudly complained that "that old rogue Picton" had stolen their supplies for his Third.

Wellington was angry at the way in which his commands had been ignored. He never again trusted Craufurd to the same extent. He warmly praised the conduct of the division, but he omitted to thank Craufurd. However, he did not censure him nor dismiss him from his command. He was too good a soldier to be spared.

Captain William Napier of the 43rd Light Infantry, the author of the classic *History of the War in the Peninsula*, was wounded in this action. Another

casualty that day was Lieutenant Harry Smith of the 95th, a young man of twenty-three who had a great future before him.

After Ciudad Rodrigo had fallen to Masséna, the French marshal invested Almeida, held by an Englishman named Cox and a Portuguese garrison. On the 26th August, 1810, a bombardment began and at midnight a lucky shot blew up the main magazine. The greater part of the town vanished in smoke and flame. Colonel Cox was forced by the garrison to surrender. Masséna then advanced along the Mondego. With a host of 70,000 men and enormous reserves he was confident of pushing the Anglo-Portuguese army into the sea.

Wellington decided, largely for the sake of moral effect, to stand and fight at Busaco. The position he took up was a strong one, for the hill was high and steep and rough. The night of the 26th September was fine, but windy and cold, and countless camp fires twinkled and glowed along the opposing heights. On this night before the battle, four young officers, shivering with cold, determined to find a warmer spot. Captain Urquhart, Lieutenants Tyler, Macpherson and Ouseley of the 45th Regiment, walked down the steep slope towards the enemy. Here in "No Man's Land" they found some straw and flung themselves down in it. The roll of the drums in the morning awaked them not, but the clash of bayonets being fixed did. They scrambled up to their regiments, which were drawn up in line, waiting.

They had been missed, and their colonel, Mead, did not fail to notice them as they tried to fall in un-

observed. The colonel was very angry, but the French were advancing. When the enemy had been finally thrown back the colonel saw Macpherson and said:

"Well, sir, you remember last night, I suppose? A breach of discipline not to be overlooked. Where is Captain Urquhart?"

"Killed," replied Macpherson.

"Ah," growled Mead. "But where's Ouseley, sir?"

"Killed, sir."

"And Tyler?"

"Mortally wounded, sir."

The old colonel rode off.

Two days later Macpherson received a message from his friend Tyler, who had been evacuated to Coimbra, asking to see him. Macpherson approached the colonel for leave to go to the town to be with his friend at his last moments.

"No, no," said the colonel, "you shan't go, you haven't deserved it, go to your duty, sir."

Just after this interview, Macpherson happened to meet Picton, and told him of his request that had been refused.

"What, not let you go?" Picton exclaimed. "Damme, you shall go, and tell Colonel Mead I said so, d'ye hear, sir?"

Macpherson went and told the infuriated colonel, who swore that all discipline had ceased in the army. Macpherson then set out for Coimbra, where he found Tyler sitting up to an excellent breakfast, with a place laid for him.

Neither the conduct of the young officers nor that

of General Picton seems explicable to-day. One's sympathies are with Colonel Mead.

At dawn on the 27th September, the French attacked. Accounts of the battle of Busaco are tangled and confused. It was what the Royal Air Force calls a "dog-fight," actually an affair of bayonet thrust and musket volley, of charge and counter-charge. The simplest way for the purpose of this narrative is to view it through the eyes of the various commanders concerned. As always, the Light Division was hotly engaged. The French storming uphill on Craufurd's front were greatly worried by the skilful skirmishers of the 95th and the Portuguese, who raked the French columns and then withdrew on to the main body. Craufurd followed Wellington's orders in having this main body in line just behind the crest of the hill. Ross's horse artillery was pumping shot into the massed columns of Ney's corps. The skirmishers, "breathless, begrimed with powder," retired over the edge of the crest. Back went the guns. As the exultant French topped the rise, Craufurd gave the word to the 43rd and the 52nd. They sent a crashing volley into the Frenchmen at point-blank range, and nearly two thousand bayonets glittered and flashed as they dropped to the point. With a cheer their wave broke on the enemy troops, hustling them down the hill in confusion and sweeping them away.

But it was Picton's Third Division, the "Fighting Division," on which the heaviest blow fell. Picton stood upon a ridge barring the way to a pass through the Sierra. He spent most of the night before inspecting his posts, and not far off daybreak put on a red night-

cap and lay down on the ground to sleep. The sound of musketry away on the left aroused him. It was Craufurd's Light Division in action. He put on his hat and mounted his horse. The pass was held, but the line gave way at one point. Picton placed himself at the head of a Portuguese battalion which he had in reserve. He waved his hat, shouting "Charge!" A roar of laughter burst from the Portuguese as they pressed forward. He had revealed the red nightcap still grotesquely on his head. The division was hard pressed. A gallant charge by the 45th, and the 88th under Colonel Alexander Wallace contributed greatly to the success of the day. Wellington rode up and shook hands with the latter. "Wallace," he said, "I never saw a more gallant charge than that made just now by your regiment!" Filled with pride, the colonel bowed and lowered his sword in salute.

Picton almost always carried a stick, and in battle had the habit of tapping the mane of his horse. As the fight became hotter, his excitement grew, and faster and faster went the tapping stick, till his horse would dance with annoyance.

Hill's corps was on the extreme right. It had been detached on the Tagus, and Hill marched at speed over the hills to join Wellington in time for Busaco. Wellington could always rely on Hill. He was promoted Lieutenant-General after this action. Later in the year he developed jaundice and had to go home on sick leave. His corps of some 12,000 men was handed over to Beresford, who won a good deal of credit from Busaco. The Portuguese whom he had organised and trained acquitted themselves

very well, and Beresford was made a Knight of the Bath.

Charles Napier, the eldest of the three brothers, was wounded severely in the jaw. Wellington, in spite of all his work and responsibilities, found time to write to Napier's mother. George, with the 52nd, was also wounded in the hip. Writing of this occasion, George gives a pleasing picture of Lowry Cole.

"About the third day's march [the retreat to Torres Vedras] I was so ill and stiff with my wound that I could no longer sit my horse and was forced to get into a cart and make the best of my way to Lisbon. In the progress of which, one cold dark rainy night the Portuguese driver decamped and left his cart and myself sticking in the mud. Seeing a light at some distance, I got out of the cart and made my way to it, but was so exhausted with the pain and illness, having also the ague, that I sank down perfectly done up at the door of the house where the light proceeded, and luckily for me this was the quarters of my friend Lowry Cole, commanding the Fourth Division, who, being informed that a wounded officer was at his door, immediately came down, had me carried in, gave me his own bed, had a surgeon sent for to dress my wound (the same that afterwards cut off my arm) and sent me a good dinner. After which I fell asleep and woke next morning at day-break, quite refreshed and able to get on with General Cole's Staff to the lines, where I took leave of my kind friend the General, whose kindness to me I can never forget or cease to be grateful for as long as I live. But I am not a solitary instance of Lowry Cole's

generosity, for he would never permit officer or *private soldier* to want anything he had or that it was within his power to procure for them. And though a hot-tempered and passionate man, he is as kind and generous as he is brave, and a more truly gallant and enterprising soldier never breathed."

Masséna, foiled at Busaco, manœuvred to his right and threatened Wellington's lines of communication. Wellington fell back and the retreat quickened. The British rearguard was hard pressed. Kincaid, the adjutant of the 95th, gives a vivid picture of the last days of the retirement.

"We retired the same night through Condacia, where the commissariat were destroying quantities of stores that they were unable to carry off. They handed out shoes and shirts to any one that would take them, and the streets were literally running ankle deep with rum, in which the soldiers were dipping their cups and helping themselves as they marched along. The commissariat some years afterwards called for a return of the men who had received shirts and shoes on this occasion, with a view to making us pay for them. We very briefly replied that the one half of them were dead, and the other half would be damned before they would pay anything."

Wellington safely withdrew within the Lines of Torres Vedras, his secret fortress. Stapleton Cotton covered the withdrawal, and lost not a single wagon. The Lines, a stupendous work, astonished Masséna, and so well had the secret been kept that they came as a great surprise to the retreating British Army. Only the vaguest rumours had reached the troops. The



master mind was Wellington's, but to Colonel Richard Fletcher, R.E., goes the credit for the execution of the work. It had been in preparation since the battle of Talavera, and contained five hundred square miles of mountainous country. A few words may give some notion of the tremendous natural strength of the position, and the skill of Fletcher in siting fortifications. Along the neck of the peninsula of Lisbon, between the Atlantic and the Tagus, are several ranges of high and rugged hills intersected here and there by narrow passes, and broken by deep ravines and difficult defiles. Along these, about twenty-five miles from the city, two separate lines were selected, one behind the other, a considerable distance apart and of immense strength. The right of the first line lay upon the slopes of Alhandra. On the summit of the hill were several forts, and the flank was also covered by a dozen gunboats in the river Tagus. The faces of the hills were carefully scarped and the road through them destroyed. The pass on the left was blocked by two redoubts. Not only was the pass commanded by the Alhandra hills, but also by its hills on the other side. The latter, like the former, were made inaccessible. They were linked up with the centre of the position, a high mountain, on which was perched a very strong point. This fort entirely commanded the Lisbon Road. To the left was hilly broken country, the hills dominating the various roads. On the extreme left was another high mountain, completely blocking all access. The slopes were all steep, and impeded with rocks, boulders or tangled vineyards. Every natural obstacle was reinforced by the skill of the engineer.

A third line of trenches was dug to cover embarkation if the worst came to the worst, and a fleet of transports was kept in the river. A fine body of British marines manned the third line, the Portuguese artillery and militia manned the second and much of the first. There were 600 guns, a great armament in those days, distributed among 150 forts. The British regulars were kept free to reinforce any threatened point, and there was a mighty fleet of warships in Lisbon Harbour.

Masséna had a good look at the Lines and was beaten by them. The British retreat began to look rather like a British victory. Masséna was in a serious plight. The country had been already ravaged by his own armies, and much of what was left had been brought within the Lines. Wellington had the sea behind him, with unhampered supplies. The French were hundreds of miles from their bases, and their convoys, though heavily guarded, were liable to be raided and plundered by the Spanish guerilla bands. Masséna was checked and baffled, and a retreat was sooner or later inevitable. Wellington sat still and waited for it.

The troops behind Torres Vedras were in huts at first. Here is a picture of life in the army on active service. Lieutenant Grattan of the 88th, Connaught Rangers, speaks:

"Although our situation was in every respect better than that of the enemy, we were far from comfortable. Our huts, from want of any good materials to construct them, were but a weak defence against the heavy rains which fell at this time. We had no straw to serve

as thatch, and the heath which we were obliged to use as a substitute, though it looked well enough when in full leaf and blossom and was a delightful shelter in fine weather, became a wretched protection against the torrents that soon after inundated us. The inside of our habitation presented an appearance as varied as it was uncomfortable. At one end might be seen a couple of officers, with their cloaks thrown about them, snoring on a truss of straw. Over their heads hung their blankets, which served as a kind of inner wall, and for a time stopped the flood that deluged the parts of the hut not so defended. This, by degrees, becoming completely saturated with rain, not only lost its original appearance, but what was worse, its original usefulness. For the water, dripping down from the edges, gradually made its way towards the centre of the blanket, and thus by degrees it assumed a shape not unlike the parachute of a balloon. Finally the whole, being overpowered with its own weight, and either giving way at the bottom, or breaking its hold from the twigs which feebly held it at top, overwhelmed those it was intended to protect, and in the space of a minute more effectually drenched them than the heaviest fall of rain would accomplish in several hours. In another corner lay some one else, who for want of a better substituted a sheet or old tablecloth as a temporary defence. This was even more disastrous than the blanket. It soon performed the functions of a filtering machine, and was to the full as unserviceable as the blanket. Others, more stout and convivial, sat up smoking cigars and drinking brandy punch, waiting for the signal to proceed to

our alarm post, a duty which the army performed every morning two hours before day. This was by no means a pleasant task. Scrambling up a hill of mud and standing shivering for a couple of hours in the dark and wet was exceedingly uncomfortable, but I don't remember to have heard one single murmur."

An experience such as this was a commonplace of the last Great War in Flanders, softened in retrospect, as Grattan's was, by the relief of getting into dry billets or tents at last.

When the troops were really settled in for the winter, life became tolerable, even enjoyable. Wellington did not believe in harassing his troops in rest. He held a minimum of reviews, inspections and drills. The officers in particular had plenty of sport, fox-hunting, coursing, boxing, and cock-fighting. Tom Crane the huntsman was out with Wellington's pack of foxhounds three times a week. One day when Wellington was not present, hounds found a strong fox, and away went the field at a great pace with a breast-high scent. The fox was headed by a working party of infantry returning from the trenches, and forthwith made for the outpost line, No Man's Land, and enemy country. "Hold hard, gentlemen," sung out the Master. The whips were about to call off hounds, when Tom shouted "Leave 'em!" and turning to the astonished Master said, "Where my fox goes, so do I," and galloped off with hounds in full cry before him. He killed, and as his excitement cooled, he found himself in an awkward situation. A patrol of French light cavalry cut him off and took him prisoner.

The Frenchmen were thoroughly puzzled. At first they thought he was a milord, but later decided that he was not. He was returned hounds and all under a flag of truce, with many mutual courtesies between the officers.

About this time Wellington expressed considerable anger with some of his officers who were in the habit of writing home pessimistic letters and giving away valuable information. There was no censorship on letters or newspapers. "Croaking," Wellington called it. In a letter to Craufurd, who had gone home on leave, he complains again about this practice.

" . . . If our Staff and other officers would mind their business, instead of write news and keep coffee houses. But as soon as an accident happens, every man who can write, who has a friend who can read, sits down to write his account of what he does not know and his comments on what he does not understand; and these are diligently circulated and exaggerated by the idle and malicious, of whom there are plenty in all armies. The consequence is that officers and whole regiments lose their reputation; a spirit of party, which is the bane of all armies, is engendered and fomented; a want of confidence ensues, and there is no character however meritorious, and no action however glorious, which can have justice done to it."

In winter forage for the horses was very scarce. The peasants hid their straw (there was no hay) with the greatest care and cunning. To save it was the only chance they had of keeping their draught oxen alive till the spring. But foraging parties under the command

of a subaltern officer used to find the straw. They would drag it from under the beds or even take it from the mattresses. Such is war. Small wonder that the peasantry of all countries hate war and all soldiers.

Captain Tomkinson, of the 16th Light Dragoons, writing from Portugal in October, 1810, says that he was on patrol when he met a "plundering party" of two hundred men with four file of cavalry. Only half were armed, the rest carried sacks or other receptacles. Whether it was just a looting foray or a properly detailed foraging party is not quite clear. Probably the latter. Whichever it was, it did not surprise or disturb Tomkinson.

Unofficial plundering, though common enough, was frowned on by the Higher Command. Within the Lines of Torres Vedras some of Picton's division broke open a wine store and got well and truly drunk. There was a church parade the following Sunday. Picton delivered the sermon, just as Drake took over from Parson Fletcher after the execution of Doughty. His dark visage was stern, and he lashed the troops with his bitter tongue. He did his best to put down looting, but in some ways he was almost indulgent. He did not shrink from cursing, but he could occasionally bless.

Masséna's retreat was only a matter of time. He could not help himself. His infrequent convoys were captured, their escorts massacred, and any straggler or sick man knifed or worse. There was nothing to be obtained from the countryside, so in November he went to Santarem. By March, 1811, he was out of Portugal. The Third Division and the Light Division,

Picton and Craufurd, were immediately in pursuit, but the awful roads impeded both sides. The Anglo-Portuguese army of 35,000 men was following up and harassing 60,000 men and more, and Wellington therefore was very careful not to bring on a general engagement. All this time General Lowry Cole had been with the army, commanding the Fourth Division. In 1809 he had got into touch with Lord Wellington, or Sir Arthur Wellesley as he then was, who on his appointment to Portugal offered Cole the Fourth. Major Roverea, who was on Cole's staff and was one of his closest friends, wrote of him:

"General Cole is a young man, with very polished manners and great charm, belonging to one of the first families in Ireland . . . very warm-hearted and sincere. He is very much attached to his family and is adored by them. He is a keen soldier and would go to the end of the world in pursuit of his profession. He is also an excellent mechanic, has very good taste and understands better than any one how to keep a comfortable ménage."

Cole's mess certainly became famous throughout the Army. Wellington felt he could always rely on Cole, and relations between these two fellow-countrymen were invariably happy. The liking was mutual. A few months after he had joined the Peninsular Army Cole said that he had never served under any chief he liked so much as Wellington, Sir John Moore only excepted. The brilliant but erratic Craufurd, on the other hand, was often a source of anxiety to his chief, who had to be on the watch to restrain his ardour. For instance, during the pursuit the enemy showed

Craufurd three battalions of infantry and six squadrons of cavalry as a decoy, the rest of Junot's corps being concealed from sight. Craufurd thought he could see the whole of the rearguard. He made his dispositions for attack, when Lord Wellington cantered up and prevented him from running his neck into the noose. "Are you aware, General," he observed, "that the whole of Junot's corps is close to the body of troops you now see? He has at least 23,000 men, a large portion being cavalry."

Shortly after this incident Craufurd took it into his head to go off to England on six months' leave in order to see his wife and children, to whom he was greatly devoted. This irregular proceeding annoyed Wellington very much. It seems extraordinary that he was allowed to go. Craufurd indeed talked about retiring, in the midst of a great war. It is doubtful if Wellington could have stopped him if he had really meant to retire. It was one of the evils of the system of the purchase of commissions that, as General Fuller has said, "Once an officer had invested his money in the army, his army life became his private business and was in no sense a public duty."



## VIII

### *Battles and Bivouacs*

WHEN THE YEAR 1811 opened in mist and rain, Marshal Soult, the Duke of Dalmatia, was occupying all Andalusia, save Cadiz. This town was held by the allies, including about 4,000 British troops under Graham, supported from the sea, but blockaded from the land by Marshal Victor. At the end of February, however, Soult was ordered to support Masséna, who had come up against the Torres Vedras line. Victor was therefore left in the air, and the allies planned an amphibian expedition. Graham with his troops embarked at Cadiz, landed at Algeçiras, and marched to Tarifa. Here he met La Peña with 7,000 Spaniards, and the two marched to encounter Victor. Ignoring Wellington's advice, Graham yielded the command to La Peña for the sake of united action. La Peña, it was obvious, was not the sort of man to take orders from any one. Indeed, he opposed everything except the enemy.

Graham was now sixty years old, a handsome man with rather long white hair, tall and broad and strong. On the 5th March, he took up a position at Barossa, a low ridge close to the coast. La Peña ordered Graham to advance through the pine wood to his front, which lay between him and Victor's position on the hill opposite. The objective was a spot half-way between

Barossa and the river Isla, and the idea was supposed to be to secure communication over the river. Graham expected that La Peña would remain on the ridge to cover him, but La Peña calmly marched away out of the battle. Graham was thus caught in flank. Retreat would have meant disorder and disaster. Graham instantly attacked, though out-numbered by two to one. Napier speaks of the "heroic vigour of Graham, whose attack was an inspiration rather than a resolution, so wise, so sudden was the decision, so swift, so conclusive was the execution" In a few minutes Graham got his men, units all mixed up, to the edge of the wood, and before Victor could deploy led an attack himself on the French. With his white hair flowing and waving his plumed hat, he rode ahead of his line of battle and drove the enemy off the field. The battle, a desperate bloody fight, had lasted only one and a half hours, but the British had been under arms for twenty-four hours without food, and were too tired to pursue.

The 28th Regiment, which especially distinguished itself in this fierce encounter, ran a regimental mess during the days before the battle. All the officers within reach were made honorary members, a hundred and fifty in all. On the second day they passed a restriction act, limiting each officer to a pint of port a day and half a bottle of claret. Yet they drank a pipe of port dry in less than four days. Porter and brandy were unlimited. Two thousand bottles were emptied in a week, including all drinks. The messman had a terrible time with the accounts. He was a sergeant named Farrell, who said he knew algebra.

But even this mathematical prodigy could not keep the score correctly, with all the officers of the 28th and over a hundred honorary members putting away port, brandy, claret and porter with such rapidity. They marched out of Tarifa with aching heads.

When in the pine wood, Graham caught sight of Colonel Browne, with the 28th drawn up on the edge of it. Riding up at once he said, "Browne, did not I give you orders to attack yon hill?"

"Yes, sir," replied Browne, "but you would not have me attack the whole French army with 470 men."

"It's a bad business, Browne. You must instantly attack."

"Very well, sir," said the Colonel. Browne rode to the front of his battalion, took off his hat, and spoke.

"Gentlemen, I am happy to be the bearer of good news. General Graham has done you the honour of being the first to attack those fellows. Now follow me, you rascals!"

He broke into song, his favourite air, "Hearts of Oak."

*Come, cheer up, my lads, 'tis to glory we steer,  
And add something new to this wonderful year.*

Browne was a typical specimen of Wellington's fighting colonels. They talked of honour and glory in a way that would make a modern British soldier hot and uncomfortable. Honour the latter would take for granted and would leave it to look after

itself. As for glory, there is none in modern war, if indeed there ever was.

Four hundred and sixty-eight men and twenty-one officers were running their heads against a position defended by thousands of veteran troops, with eight guns and several squadrons of cavalry. As Browne trotted forward he was met by a blizzard of cannon shot and musketry. In a few moments he was the only unwounded officer. Half his men had fallen and the rest melted away behind such cover as was available. Browne fell in with the Guards, who were coming up in support. They advanced with all the gallantry and steadiness that one expects from the Guards. Browne thought he had lost his whole battalion, but it was left to Lieutenant Blakeney, wounded as he was, to pull together the two hundred or so of the 28th who had taken cover, and bring them on with the Guards. Blakeney, echoing the rather flamboyant style of his colonel, thus describes the Guards' advance:

"Never did the household troops witness a day more honourable to their corps, nor one upon which they more brilliantly maintained the honour of their prince."

There is an Elizabethan ring about that.

A French divisional general, Rousseau, was killed in this action. His dog, a white poodle, sought him out, howling miserably and licking his face. Graham saw that the general had honourable burial. The dog lay down upon his grave. Moved by the sight, Graham drew the dog away, adopted him, and eventually took him home to Perthshire.

Graham received the thanks of Parliament and a

K.C.B. for his brilliant victory, the freedom of the City of London, and, what he greatly appreciated, the praise and congratulation of his Commander-in-Chief. Six weeks after the battle the following remarkable letter was received by Graham. It was evidently composed by a man who tried to copy the trick of writing in the flowery style, fashionable in the early nineteenth century, but it is a tribute of which any officer would be proud.

“Isla de Leon,

15th April, 1811.

“SIR,—The non-commissioned officers and private soldiers of the detachment battalion of Guards, animated with a grateful sense of what we owe to you for your paternal care and government of us, and not knowing what opportunity we may have to address you when we shall receive orders to embark from this place on our return to England, or to go to Portugal, beg leave to address you as soldiers and to offer our grateful thanks for the glorious manner in which you led us to victory, and the noble manner in which you prepared us for it, which made us forget the fatigues of eighteen hours under arms when the word was given for battle.

When the 5th of March shall again return, while we recount with exultation the achievements of the day, the glorious name of Graham shall resound—alike our Father and our Friend!

Your clemency, noble General, on all occasions, your paternal and indulgent care which made us love you, so it made us follow with enthusiasm your

orders, which we well knew would lead us only to glory. A part of us you led through the hottest fire to cover the artillery, and twice to the charge. For the honour we gained there we return you our sincere thanks, and cannot help expressing our admiration at the glorious heroism and gallantry which we witnessed in you.

We beg leave to repeat through you our thanks to our noble and gallant colonel, the Honourable Cranley Onslow, and the rest of our gallant officers, who so nobly shared our fatigues and assisted to mitigate them. . . . Had they not re-echoed the same spirit of indulgence and martial honour which General Graham inspired and Brigadier-General Dilkes showed, the foe had lost no prisoners, or we had lost the battle.

Believing, Sir, that this testimony of your gallantry, ability and heroism will not be the less acceptable as coming from soldiers who fought and conquered under your command,

We have the honour to be,

Your most obedient humble servants."

A few months later Wellington brought Graham from Cadiz to Portugal and gave him the command of the left wing of the allied army. As was natural under the circumstances, Graham refused the title of Grandee of Spain which the Spanish Government offered him.

Entries from Graham's diary show how much sport was part of the life of the army. For instance:

1811. *Nov. 3rd.*—Rode out with the greyhounds.  
Fly runs well; killed one hare.

Under date 17th November, Hill writes to him to say that they have a tolerable pack of hounds at Portalègre.

*Dec. 9th.*—Met Lord Wellington at 12. Bad sport, cold and wet, and bad scent.

*Dec. 21st.*—Rode out coursing; greyhounds killed a fox.

*Dec. 23rd.*—Found a fox in the first cover we drew, and ran almost without a check for 35 minutes very hard, and killed in the open field.

The battle of Barossa was really a side-show. The main operations were taking place farther north. In the spring of 1811, Masséna was compelled by lack of supplies to retire from before the Lines of Torres Vedras, but had Wellington's demands been strictly carried out by the Portuguese authorities and the country swept completely bare of provision, Masséna could not have remained there a week. Wellington came out in pursuit. Actions were fought at Pombal and Redinha, and also one foggy morning at Casal Nova. Erskine, in temporary command of the Light Division while Craufurd was on leave, displayed his usual incompetence, sending the 52nd forward in column of sections without any precautions. The result was that when the curtains of mist dissolved and slowly rolled away the 52nd were discovered on the opposite slopes unsupported and attacking Ney's whole corps. The rest of the division was then flung forward, while Picton and Cole turned the enemy's

right. Ney extricated himself with skill and continued the retreat.

The next day, March 15, Marshal Ney took up a strong position with his right resting on some thick woods and his left on the village of Foz d'Aronce. Behind him was the river Ceira, swollen and impassable by reason of the rains, and rushing through a narrow gorge. Owing to the thick weather, the allied troops did not arrive in front of the position until four o'clock in the afternoon. They were hungry and tired, and lit their fires, hoping to cook a meal and settle down for the night. Lieutenant Simmons, of the 95th, was *frying some beef and eagerly watching the sizzling steak*, when Lord Wellington rode up and said to Colonel Beckwith who was standing near, "Fall in your battalion and attack the enemy. Drive in their skirmishers, and I will turn their flank." All the Light Division and Pack's Portuguese brigade deployed and advanced through a pine wood. Twigs and branches came about their ears from the enemy's bullets. Picton with his Third Division surprised Ney's left wing, sent the Frenchmen flying and drowned two or three hundred in the furious raging river. The French were in such confusion, says Kincaid, "that they blew up a bridge before half of their own people had time to get over. Those who were thereby left behind, not choosing to put themselves to the pain of being shot, took to the river, which received them so hospitably that few of them ever quitted it."

Simmons was rewarded for the loss of his steak by the capture of some French cooking pots still poised



over glowing embers, and Kincaid gives a brisk racy account of how he was knocked out by a bullet. "I was struck by a bullet immediately above the left ear, which deposited me at full length in the mud. I know not how long I lay insensible, but on recovering, my first feeling was for my head, to ascertain if any part of it was still standing, for it appeared to me as if nothing remained above the mouth. After repeated applications of all my fingers and thumbs to the doubtful parts, I at length proved to myself satisfactorily that it had rather increased than diminished by the concussion. Jumping on my legs, and hearing by the whistling of the balls from both sides that the rascals who had got me into the scrape had been driven back and left me there, I snatched my cap, which had saved my life and which had been spun off my head to the distance of ten or twelve yards, and joined them a short distance in the rear. One of them, a soldier of the 60th, came and told me that an officer of ours had been killed a short time before, pointing to the spot where I myself had fallen, and that he had tried to take his jacket off, but that the advance of the enemy had prevented him. I told him that I was the one who had been killed, and that I was deucedly obliged to him for his kind intentions, while I felt still more so to the enemy for their timely advance. Otherwise, I have no doubt but that my friend would have taken a fancy to my trousers also, for I found that he had absolutely unbuttoned my jacket."

Picton was indefatigable in pursuit. Long before dawn he was awake. Constantly at the head of his division, he cheered and encouraged his men. He

was seen daily by them all. In the conditions of modern war the very names of the divisional commanders are often unknown to the private soldiers, to whom they are beings exalted and remote.

One day during the pursuit, a group of staff officers were searching the countryside through their field-glasses in order to pick up enemy positions. One of them remarked to Pakenham, "We shall have some sharp work there. That fort is full of men." Pakenham focused his glass on the spot. "Full of men," said he, "yes, it is full of men—but by God they've all got red jackets." They proved to be Third Division troops, who had come up so quickly that the French in their hasty departure had again left their camp kettles with a good meal for hungry British soldiers.

Edward Pakenham was another Irishman. He was Wellington's Deputy Adjutant-General, and the brother of the Kitty Pakenham that Wellington had married. He had risen swiftly in his profession. Born in 1778, at the age of twenty-one he was a lieutenant-colonel. In such a way did the purchase of promotion work. He had been in command of the 7th (Fusiliers), and was a very popular officer, noted for the care of his men, with a mind gentle, frank and generous.

Stung by the incessant attacks, which had cost him so much in prestige and in men, Masséna attempted to make a stand on a foggy morning in April at Sabugal by the Coa. This was the last fight on the soil of Portugal. The British, pursuing, were elated with victory, the French, in retreat, were exasperated, and the encounters were fierce and savage. Yet on

at least one occasion in this campaign the officers of the outposts fraternised at the end of the day, French and English eating and drinking together round a common fire. Never was a war fought with so much mutual respect.

Wellington planned to roll up Masséna's left wing, but Erskine, still commanding the Light Division, misunderstood his orders, lost himself in the mist and rain, and left Colonel Beckwith by a ford on the Coa with four companies of the 95th (Rifles) and a battalion of the 43rd. This was Colonel Beckwith's day. He was one of Sir John Moore's Shorncliffe officers. By 1803 he was a lieutenant-colonel in the Rifles, and was adored by his junior officers and men. It was intended that the Light Division should go forward when the general attack had developed, but before this happened a blundering staff officer came across Beckwith, and curtly asked him why he did not attack. Beckwith, thinking that this was the awaited order from Wellington, plunged into the stream and led his amazing infantry across. There were 1,500 of them and they were assailing unsupported 13,000 Frenchmen. The enemy's advance guard was driven in, but their bullets hissed into the water around the green and red jackets as they splashed waist deep across the rushing river. A blinding drizzle of rain prevented the French from realising the weakness of this daring little force. The British climbed a steep wooded hill, and from the top dealt out a deadly volley into the close-packed Frenchmen as they struggled up to meet them. For an hour they fought. Three times it came to the bayonet. Beckwith, with blood pouring down

his face from a head wound, rode among the skirmishers, cheering them on. At last weight of numbers told, and the "light bobs" began to fall back. Just at this moment two battalions of the 52nd arrived out of the mist, and reinforced the 95th went forward again. Picton and the Third Division came up on the left, and so the French were pushed back in disorder and defeat. Picton rode along his line, his stick over his shoulder, as calm as if there were no bullets flying. "Steady, steady," he called out, "don't fire until I give you the word." Not a shot was fired till the line came within a few yards range. Then a volley, a cheer, and the bayonet.

It is astounding that an incompetent officer like Sir William Erskine should have continued so long in command of a famous division, or indeed any division. It is said that Wellington had no use for him, but found him difficult or impossible to remove because of the influence behind him. A few days later, Colonel Bevan was too late at Barba del Puerco with his (the 4th) regiment, owing to Erskine having mislaid his orders. Wellington gave to the unfortunate Bevan one of his stinging rebukes. Bevan was so distressed that he shot himself. The order had been sent from headquarters to Erskine for transmission. Erskine forgot all about it, and long afterwards found the order in his pocket. In one of his despatches Wellington expresses doubt of his sanity, and indeed, after the campaign of 1812, Erskine also shot himself.

Kincaid of the Rifles gives this little note of the battle: "There was a little spaniel belonging to one of our officers running about the whole time, barking at

the balls, and I saw him once smelling at a live shell, which exploded in his face without hurting him."

Masséna, sullen and reluctant, crossed the Portuguese frontier, and for want of supplies fell back all the way to Salamanca. It was when the French army was nearing the town that Colonel Waters effected a dramatic escape. He was the Intelligence officer who procured the boats for the crossing of the Douro at Oporto in 1809. Like Colquhoun Grant he usually wore uniform on his lone expeditions, and so escaped being shot as a spy if captured. He had been taken prisoner in Portugal, and had as his escort some mounted gendarmes. He was on his own horse, a swift beast, whereas the only good horse in his escort was that of its leader. Waters waited till the leader had dismounted and was some little way from his mount. He then dug in his spurs and dashed for open country. The gendarmes pounded along behind him, swords in their hands. For miles before and after him the French army covered the plain. He galloped along the flank of the marching columns, drawing away from his pursuers. By some miracle he was not intercepted, though musket balls constantly whistled past him. He made for the woods, shook off his pursuers, and succeeded after three days in reaching British headquarters. Wellington had ordered Waters's baggage to be brought thither, observing that he would not be long away.

Almeida, the last place in Portugal to be held by the French, was invested by the British army. Wellington went south to inspect Beresford's Portuguese troops, and left in command the senior

officer, General Sir Brent Spencer. Masséna, reinforced and revictualled, came to the relief of Almeida. Wellington returned just in time to meet him at Fuentes d'Onoro, in May, 1811.

It has been said, perhaps rashly, that Wellington never lost a battle. He came very near to losing this one. At best, it was a dubious victory for the allied army. It is true that the village itself was defended by the British against repeated attacks, and the main object of the battle, the relief of Almeida, was denied to the French. On the other hand, the French turned the right flank of the British line, compelled Wellington to give up miles of ground and to change his front. As so often happens in war, both sides made mistakes, and nothing very decisive resulted.

It would be tedious to follow too closely the fortunes of all the divisions engaged in this encounter. It will be sufficient to deal with those two picturesque personalities, Robert Craufurd and Thomas Picton, mentioning one or two others in passing. Craufurd rejoined his division just before the battle began. He trotted up to the front of his line on his well-known brown cob, and a welcoming cheer greeted him. Craufurd bowed repeatedly, taking off his hat. He was particularly amused and pleased by the Portuguese *caçadores*, who shouted, "Long live General Craufurd, who looks after our bellies!" His men liked him, but with certain exceptions, such as George Napier and Sydney Beckwith, his officers did not. He was too apt to chide them in front of the men, and young officers do not like being publicly abused.

Craufurd had to retreat by battalions in squares,

with a swarm of 5,000 French cavalry hovering round him, for nearly three miles back to the new position Wellington had been forced to take up. The manœuvre was brilliantly successful. The division was as steady as a rocky cliff fronting angry waves, retiring with precision of a field day, its bayonets glittering, a warning to the horsemen of what they might expect if they dared.

The morning was misty, but the fog gradually dissolved beneath the sun, and the heat became very trying to the men of Picton's division, the 71st (Highland Light Infantry) and the 79th (Cameron Highlanders) who were endeavouring to hold the village against a series of fierce attacks. They fought the French grenadiers around the chapel and over the graves, taking cover behind tombstones and stone walls, but they were being forced slowly back. Pakenham galloped up to Colonel Wallace of the 88th, who was in reserve on the high ground above the cemetery.

"Do you see that, Wallace?" he said.

"I do," said the colonel, "and I would rather drive the French out of the town than cover a retreat across the river."

"Perhaps his lordship don't think it tenable."

"I shall take it with my regiment and keep it too."

"Will you? I'll go and tell Lord Wellington so; see, here he comes." In a minute Pakenham returned at a gallop, waving his hat.

"He says you may go, come along, Wallace!"

So these two rode gaily into the fight at the head

of the shouting Connaught Rangers, gathering as they went the Highlanders with them.

Picton had recently blackguarded the 88th on account of a plundering raid. Greeting them on this day after their successful counter-attack, he shouted, "Well done, the 88th!" Some men called out, "Are we blackguards now?" A smile lighted Picton's grim face as he said, "No, no, to-day has wiped out all that!"

Picton's angry temper often boiled over. Headquarters baggage had by old custom the right of priority on the march, in other words, it was not obliged to turn aside to let troops pass. One day about this time Picton was overtaking it with his division and ordered it off the road. Wellington's butler rather unwisely pleaded privilege. Picton furiously beat him over the head with his umbrella. "If you don't give way immediately," he shouted, "I'll have you tied up and flogged by the provost-marshal!"

Picton would be bound by no convention. He was not so fond as most of his contemporaries of waving a sword. He carried a stick or an umbrella, and frequently wore an old civilian frock coat and a battered top hat.

Whether or no Wellington won Fuentes d'Onoro, Masséna had to fall back over the Agueda, with Almeida still unrelieved. However, to Wellington's intense wrath, the French general Brennier at Almeida brilliantly extricated his garrison and broke clean through the beleaguering force. If Erskine, as has been already related, had forwarded the orders to Colonel Bevan, Brennier would have been caught.



Referring to this incident, Wellington in a private letter declared that he "began to be of the opinion that there is nothing on earth so stupid as a gallant officer." In disgust, he left his headquarters and went down south again to see what Beresford was doing. South of the Tagus, Soult had beaten the Spaniards and advanced towards Portugal. Beresford had been sent to check him and to lay siege to Badajoz, which had fallen to the French. At the end of 1810, General Hill had to go home on sick leave, and Beresford had taken over his corps. There could not have been a greater contrast between "Farmer" Hill and the hasty Irishman. The corps consisted of the Second and Fourth Divisions of infantry, eighteen guns, five regiments of British and Portuguese cavalry, about 15,000 men in all, not counting two divisions of Spaniards. The Portuguese were in blue uniforms, the Spanish in yellow, and the British in their familiar scarlet jackets. Beresford was very ill-supplied with material for a siege, and entirely lacked the necessary body of expert sappers and miners. Hearing that Soult was advancing on him from Seville, Beresford abandoned Badajoz and stood to fight on the 16th May on the ridge of Albuera. Of purely British infantry he probably had not more than 7,000 to meet the famous and ardent veterans of France, under Soult, their renowned commander. Cole's Fourth Division was still marching in from Badajoz on the 15th, as were Blake's Spaniards, who were posted on the right of the line when they arrived during the night. Next morning Beresford perceived that the main attack would be launched against his right, and he ordered Blake to change his

front and protect his flank. This manœuvre was carried out so slowly that Beresford, with his fiery Irish impatience very naturally aroused, took command in person. It was in vain. The French attacked with vigour, caught the Spanish in the act of changing direction, and sent them flying.

When the Spaniards broke, Beresford rushed up, grabbed an ensign, colours and all, by the collar and dragged him forward, hoping to rally the men. They would not follow, and when Beresford let go, the ensign ran back for all he was worth to rejoin his comrades. Beresford was very tall and broad and strong. He parried a Polish lancer's thrust, caught the man round the neck, hauled him off his horse and flung him on the ground. Beresford's position seemed desperate. His lines were drawn up on the crest of the hill in full view of Soult. Wellington would have kept the main body behind the crest and lying down. Proudly and steadily the troops stood up to the fire. The 57th, the Die-hards, were almost annihilated. General Houghton sat his horse in front of his brigade in a green frock-coat. His servant rode up with his scarlet uniform coat, and he changed without dismounting as the bullets whistled by and the cannon-balls lumbered along. He was hit again and again, and at last he fell and died.

In spite of his personal efforts, it was not Beresford who saved the day. Rooke and Hardinge, two staff officers, rode up to Lowry Cole with the news that things were going ill, and urged him to move the Fourth Division to the support of the Second, which had gone to reinforce the right. Cole had already sent

an A.D.C. to Beresford, requesting instructions to advance, but the officer had been hit on the way. Cole, though under orders not to move on his own responsibility, turned a blind eye to the same and went forward. The Fourth Division emerged from the battle smoke and was smitten with a deadly fire. Cole and all his staff fell wounded to the ground. The Fusiliers swayed, recovered, and passed on. In Napier's glowing words:

"Nothing could stop that astounding infantry. Their flashing eyes were bent on the dark columns in their front; their measured tread shook the ground; their dreadful volleys swept away the head of every formation. . . . In vain did the French reserves endeavour to sustain the fight; their efforts only increased the irremediable confusion, and the mighty mass, giving way like a loosened cliff, went headlong down the ascent. The rain flowed after in streams discoloured with blood, and 1,500 unwounded men, the remnant of 6,000 unconquerable British soldiers, stood triumphant on the fatal hill!"

No one would dare to write like that in these days. Perhaps no one could.

All night the pitiless rain fell upon the wounded, the dying, and the dead. The next morning the battlefield presented an appalling sight—thousands of dead, stripped naked by the Spaniards during the night, smashed arms and equipment, pitiful bloody rags, pathetic scraps of letters, all the sad debris of war. The British remained on the field, and Soult retired, but it was a victory dearly bought. Soult complained, "There is no beating those fellows, in

spite of their generals. I turned their right flank, penetrated their centre. They were completely beaten, and the day mine. Yet they would not run." If indeed it was right to fight the battle at all, it should not have been fought in a hesitating piecemeal fashion. The valour of the British infantry saved the day. "The person of the general-in-chief was indeed seen everywhere, a gallant soldier! but the mind of the great commander was seen nowhere." However, at home it was considered a glorious victory. Parliament voted, amid cheers, its thanks to Sir William Carr Beresford and his men. Beresford was loyal and never a "croaker," and Wellington stood by him, but Wellington did not repeat the experiment of giving him an independent command. It was not until after Salamanca that he obtained any position of note, and then he was under Wellington's immediate eye. Wellington wrote in a private letter: "Such another battle would ruin us; I am labouring hard to set all right again."

As soon as Cole had recovered sufficiently from his wound he went on home leave. He was missed, for he was very hospitable and was said to keep the best table in the Army. A staff officer, recently out from home, was invited to dinner by Lord Wellington. He hesitated a little, and then said that though greatly honoured he was awkwardly placed, as he had already accepted an invitation from General Sir Rowland Hill. "Go by all means," said Wellington. "You will get a much better feed there than here. As you are a stranger, I'll give you some useful information. Cole gives the best dinners in the Army, Hill the next

best, mine are no great things, and Beresford's and Picton's are very bad indeed." His lordship cannot have liked the Portuguese flavour of Beresford's mess. Colonel Frazer, of the horse gunners, dined with Beresford at his headquarters, and spoke of an excellent dinner, "the best in the Army." He said that it was furnished by the Portuguese Government and served on superb plate.

Wellington sent Beresford to Lisbon after Albuera, to superintend the new reorganisation of the Portuguese forces. Beresford's health broke down, and he spent much of the rest of the year at Cintra, for the sea bathing.

After Soult's retirement, Wellington again invested Badajoz. It seemed a hopeless task at first. The Spanish guns available for the siege were some of them cast in soft brass in Philip the Second's time, for use against the England of Elizabeth. The shot was too small and of all sorts of odd sizes. Major Dickson, a highly intelligent and energetic gunner officer, improvised a siege train of fifty-two pieces of varying calibre, a noteworthy feat under the circumstances. But the guns and stores were too few, the assault was made too soon and was mismanaged. After losing 400 officers and men the siege was again abandoned in face of the united forces of Marmont and Soult, but the Spanish regulars and irregulars continued fighting. Though beaten again and again and indifferently led, they yet greatly harassed the French invaders. If they embarrassed their allies by incompetent generalship, their persistence in the war was a sore trouble to the enemy.

In September, 1811, Napoleon largely reinforced his armies in Spain. Wellington took up a position on the Agueda near the Portuguese frontier, and was attacked on the heights of El Bodon. The French cavalry in great strength nearly overwhelmed the British lines, and succeeded in capturing the Portuguese guns. The Third Division under Picton was in the centre. One of his regiments, the 5th, the "Fighting Fifth," under Major Ridge, undaunted by the glittering sabres and the blaze of light from the brazen helmets, deployed into line, fired a volley as they advanced, and actually charged the cavalry with the bayonet, the first time cavalry had ever been attacked by infantry in line. This "impossible" manoeuvre was successful. The French horsemen were driven down the slope, the lost guns were retaken, limbered up, and carried off. The check was only temporary, and the Third Division was in peril of being cut off. Wellington ordered its retirement to the plain behind. Repelling a fierce attack on their squares, the regiments formed quarter column and marched for six miles over open country, being shot at with artillery, and ever standing fast against the thunderous waves of horse. It was a triumph of discipline, due to Picton's coolness, and the men's steadiness in keeping their dressing and distance. Each battalion in turn was a rearguard. It fired a volley, and then, with pieces empty, retired through the rest at the double.

Only a part of the allied army was engaged in this combat, but that part was at times in a critical position. Craufurd's Light Division was about sixteen miles away. Craufurd had been told to make a night march

in order to join the main body. He did not move till daylight, since, owing to the nature of the ground, he thought a night march impossible. When he arrived half a day late, Wellington remarked acidly, "I am glad to see you safe, Craufurd." "Oh, I was in no danger, my lord," replied Craufurd. "But *I* was, owing to your being late," Wellington snapped. He turned and rode away. Said Craufurd to his staff, "He's damned crusty to-day."

The field campaign this year ended with a brilliant little action at Arroyo de Molinos at the end of October. Hill, who after Albuera had resumed his command, suggested that he should cut off Girard's corps. Wellington approved and gave him a free hand. Hill marched all night over rough mountain tracks in pouring rain to a point close to the French lines. The French had no inkling of their presence. Day dawned in storms of wind and rain. The cheering columns rushed the village, the bugles blowing, and the pipes of the 92nd Highlanders and the 71st Highland Light Infantry sounding high above the storm: *Hey, Johnnie Cope, are ye waukin' yet?* Hill on horseback led the advance. The French were completely surprised. They threw away their equipment and fled to the mountains, but not before 1,400 prisoners were taken, including thirty-five officers. There followed an exciting chase. The British, Spaniards, and Portuguese forgot the fatigue of their long march and the rain that had drenched them all night long, and laughing and shouting they scrambled up the steep hillsides after the fugitives. Wellington wrote: "My dear Hill, nothing could be more satisfactory to me than all you

did," and Graham sent a warm letter of congratulation. Hill won a knighthood for that morning's work.

The old year closed with the successful defence of Tarifa by General Campbell. In November, Wellington had withdrawn to the Coa for the winter, and the troops went into billets, where they were cold and wet and feverish. Some promotions were announced. Picton was made a lieutenant-general. He was a rich man now, for his soldier uncle had recently died, leaving a considerable fortune to his nephew. Under Picton's rough exterior there abode a generous spirit, and he was careful to keep up or increase his uncle's charitable annuities.

Bloody and stubborn as the year's battles had been, the new year was to bring with it even fiercer struggles, desperate valour and bitter shame, a crushing victory and a weary long retreat.



## IX

### *"Unto the Breach, Dear Friends!"*

AT THE CLOSE OF 1811 Napoleon had withdrawn from Spain 60,000 veteran troops, including the Imperial Guard, for service in Russia. That operation still left him with 300,000, an overwhelming force had Wellington been obliged to meet it all at once. However, it was widely scattered all over the Peninsula, on account of the impossibility of feeding such a concentrated host. Wellington, with his much smaller army, was oppressed with the same difficulty. The bulk of his troops, some 45,000 fit men, was on the Coa that winter, but Hill remained south of the Tagus with another 10,000. At first sickness and semi-starvation prevailed on the Coa, officers and men were in rags, beasts were dying fast. Tremendous efforts were made to remedy this state of things, with considerable success, and the moral of the troops was high. Lord Fitzroy Somerset, Wellington's Military Secretary, set up a system of intercourse between the Commander-in-Chief and his staff on the one hand and the generals and even the battalion commanders on the other, which was very good for moral and discipline.

Wellington came to a sudden, swift and bold decision. He would undertake a winter campaign, and seize Ciudad Rodrigo before Marmont could

collect a relief force. The resolve was daring, but he did not dare to remain too long inactive. The allied governments behind him were restive. Moreover, Ciudad Rodrigo was a great frontier fortress, a base for his next invasion into Spain. He thought that he had just time to take it. He crossed the Agueda on New Year's Day, 1812, and marched for Ciudad Rodrigo through wind and snow and rain and mud. Previously the allies had lacked heavy siege guns, and still more, transport to move them. That very zealous artillery officer Alexander Dickson had, during the closing months of 1811, collected far behind the lines guns, ammunition, wagons, oxen and pack-mules. The guns were brought up the Douro to the head of navigation, then lugged over the hills by oxen. All this preparation was unknown to the French, and Wellington's dash at Rodrigo was a complete surprise.

The troops detailed for the assault were Picton's Third Division, Craufurd's Light Division and Denis Pack's Portuguese Brigade, with the First and Fourth Divisions in reserve. On the 8th January, the outwork of San Francisco was brilliantly stormed by Colonel Colborne, the officer commanding the 52nd. He was a Hampshire man, educated at Christ's Hospital, and gazetted ensign in 1794. He had won every step in his career without purchase. Colborne had with him three hundred picked men from the three famous regiments of the Light Division. The success of this furious onset enabled trenches for the guns to be commenced during the night, within breaching distance of the walls. By daylight the digging troops were under cover. Each division was relieved every

twenty-four hours. The weather was dry and frosty. The ground was hard, and the tools supplied to the army by swindling contractors were exceedingly bad. The reliefs had to wade the Agueda up to their middles, and "every man carried a pair of iced breeches into the trenches with him." Very soon the batteries were in position, and in a few days two breaches were made, the Great and the Small. Time pressed. The assault was ordered for 7 p.m. on the 19th January. Wellington's orders were, "Ciudad Rodrigo must be taken to-night." The Third Division was to storm the Great Breach, and the Light Division the Small, famous men under renowned commanders. The storming party of the Third Division consisted of about 500 volunteers from the 74th, and that of the Light Division some three hundred of the 52nd under Major George Napier.

The 5th Regiment of the Third Division was to follow the storming party, and scale the wall with ladders after crossing the ditch. The next wave was to be the 77th. The final orders came when the men had fallen in and were hammering at their flints. Suddenly a general officer rode up at a fast canter. It was Picton. "I know," he said, "that the 5th are men whom a heavy fire will not daunt. I have the same confidence in the 77th. Good luck, and God speed you all!" He banged his heels into the flanks of his hog-maned cob and trotted off to the 88th. To them he said: "Rangers of Connaught! I won't spend any powder this evening. We'll do the business with cold iron!"

The night was calm and starry with a young moon.

There was no sound save the soft tread of the columns on the turf, and the occasional boom of a cannon from the walls. The ball would whizz overhead or fall short and rebound with a deep rushing noise as the men ducked their heads. The town clock struck seven. The ditch was defended by a strong wooden barricade. The axe-men attacked it, and as it fell to their blows, a young ensign from County Kerry let out a wild yell, and, forgetting the order for silence, the men cheered as they poured into the ditch. The shouting made the enemy realise what was happening, and they rained bombs and fizzing hand-grenades among the troops who were trying to fix the scaling ladders. The grenades and musketry fire caused heavy losses in the crowded ditch, but they scrambled over into another ditch, and ran along close under the walls till they reached the rough debris of the Great Breach. Here they were exposed to a tremendous fire of grape-shot and musketry. In the midst of the hurly-burly a magazine on the ramparts blew up, and killed among many on both sides that tall and gallant soldier, Brigadier-General Mackinnon. Suddenly a cheer was heard above the awful din, and more men appeared on the counterscarp. It was the 94th in the Scottish Brigade, who, flinging down bags of heather to break their fall, leaped into the ditch to the support of the 5th and 77th. All together under a murderous fire they scrambled up the stiff heap of rubble. The Great Breach was won.

The Light Division also heard the strokes of the clock reverberate through the deathly night, and the storming party and the following column moved

forward towards the Little Breach. The ramparts blazed with light and fire. A non-commissioned officer of the storming party in telling the story said: "The men dashed in over the breach. I had got up among the first, and was struggling with a crowd of our fellows to push over the broken and splintered wall that formed the breach, when Major (George) Napier, who was by my side encouraging on the men, received a shot and, staggering back, would in all probability have fallen into the trench had I not caught him. To my brief inquiry if he were badly hurt, he squeezed my hand, whilst his other arm hung shattered by his side, saying, 'Never mind me. Trust to your bayonets, my lads! Push on, the town is ours!'"

The explosion that killed Mackinnon lit up the scene with a sudden fierce glare and ignited a number of fire-balls which kept going off. By their light the whole glacis was swept by grape and musketry, "the devil's own brooms." But nothing could stop the Light Division. In less than half an hour from zero time the defences were theirs. Brave and over-zealous, Craufurd went forward with his men. He was almost immediately shot through the body. He lingered for five days, rallied, slept and died in his sleep.

British and Portuguese poured into the town, elated, maddened. Wine shops were attacked, the soldiers became roaring drunk. They began shooting through the locks of houses, and soon the town was given over to shameful scenes of shooting, looting and fire. Had Rodrigo surrendered, plundering would have been unlawful, but by the immemorial usages of



MAJOR-GENERAL. ROBERT CRAUFURD  
*Royal United Service Institution*



war, soldiers had the right to sack an assaulted town, and the evil tradition had not been forgotten. Precautions against such excesses should have been taken beforehand. As it was, a few officers did their best to quell the riot, but most looked the other way. Picton, with "a voice like twenty trumpets," stamped and swore and cursed, proclaiming damnation to everybody. Colonel Barnard and some other active officers assisted in restoring order by seizing the broken barrels of muskets lying about, and belabouring the drunken soldiers about the head. When at last the assaulting troops were evacuated from the town, they marched out carrying their plunder, "like a moving rag fair." Some had fixed upon their bayonets large chunks of corned beef, ham and pork.

George Napier had his right arm cut off after the assault was over. It was amputated by Staff-Surgeon Guthrie. Owing to the number of operations already done, the instruments were blunt, and it took twenty minutes. "The pain was great," as the young officer laconically remarked. Wellington visited him in hospital. Colonel Colborne of the 52nd was badly wounded, but he refused to leave his regiment until the town had been taken and his men reorganised. Harry Smith wrote of him:

"A musket ball had struck him under the epaulette of his right shoulder, and broken the head of the bone right off in the socket. To this the attention of the surgeons was of course directed. Some months after Colborne complained of a pain four inches below where the ball entered. Suppuration took place, and by surgical treatment the bone was gradually exposed.



The ball, after breaking the arm above, had descended and broken the arm four inches below, and was firmly embedded in the bone. The pain he suffered in the extraction of the ball was more even than his iron heart could bear. He used to lay his watch on the table and allow the surgeons five minutes exertion at a time, and they were three or four days before they wrenched the ball from its ossified bed. In three weeks from that day Colborne was in the Pyrenees, and in command of his regiment."

Of Robert Craufurd, Wellington in his despatch expresses his "sorrow and regret that His Majesty has been deprived of the services and I of the assistance of an officer of tried talents and experience, who was an ornament to his profession." He was buried by the men of his division on the ramparts close to the breach where he fell. The Fifth Division lined the road from the hospital. All the officers in the Army, the Spanish and Portuguese generals and staffs, and Lord Wellington with his headquarters staff formed the procession. Craufurd certainly was a great loss to the Army, for he was a soldier of brilliant gifts, and probably knew more about his profession than any one of Wellington's officers. He was apt on occasion to think and act for himself. Wellington did not like this trait. It sometimes led him into trouble. Craufurd's men respected him, indeed, they rather liked him, but he was unpopular with the officers of the Army. His bitter sarcastic tongue was much more wounding than Picton's abuse, of which no Englishman took any notice. Craufurd himself knew his faults, his touchiness, his ill-temper, as a letter to his dearly

loved wife shows. Mr. Francis Larpent, Wellington's Judge-Advocate-General, sums him up in a few words:

"He was very clever and knowing in his profession . . . but Lord Wellington never knew what he would do. . . . Lord Wellington knew his merits and humoured him; it was surprising what he bore from him at times."

The following account of a flogging parade under Craufurd by an eye-witness might be read with the tale of the flogging in Chapter Three.

"General Craufurd came riding in with his orderly. Two of our men (Rifles), one of them a corporal, ran out of a house with some bread they had stolen. They were followed by a Spanish woman, crying lustily, '*Ladrone, ladrone!*' They were immediately pursued by the general and his orderly. The bread was given back to the woman, and the men were placed in the guard-house. The next day they were tried by court-martial and brought out to a wood near the town for punishment. When the brigade was formed and the brigade-major had finished reading the proceedings of the court-martial, General Craufurd commenced lecturing both men and officers on their cruelty to the harmless inhabitants, as he called the Spaniards. Addressing our regiment, he said, 'You think because you are riflemen and more exposed to the enemy's fire than other regiments, that you can rob the inhabitants with impunity. While I command you shall not.' Then turning round to the corporal, who stood in the centre of the square, he said with a stern voice, 'Strip, sir!'

The corporal, whose name was Miles, never uttered

a word until tied up to a tree. Then turning his head round as far as he could, and seeing the general pacing up and down the square, he said, 'General Craufurd, I hope you will forgive me.' The general replied, 'No, sir, your crime is too great.' The poor corporal, whose sentence was to be reduced to the rank and pay of a private soldier and to receive one hundred and fifty lashes (and the other man two hundred), then addressed the general to the following effect:

"Do you remember, sir, when you and I were taken prisoners under General Whitelocke at Buenos Aires? We were marched with a number of others to a sort of pound, surrounded by a wall. There was a well in the centre, out of which I drew water with my mess-tin, by means of canteen straps I collected from the men who were prisoners like myself. You sat on my knapsack. I shared my last biscuit with you. You then told me you would never forget my kindness to you. It is now in your power, sir. You know how short we have been of rations for some time?'

"These words were spoken by the corporal in a mild and respectful accent, which not only affected the general, but the whole square. The bugler, who stood waiting to wield the lash, received the usual nod from the bugle-major to begin. The first lash the corporal received, the general started, and turning round said, 'What's that? what's that? Stop! Take him down! Take him down! I remember it well, I remember it well.' He paced up and down the square, muttering to himself words that I could not catch, at the same time blowing his nose and wiping his face with his handkerchief, trying to hide the emotion

that was evident to the whole parade. While untying the corporal, a dead silence prevailed for some time. Our gallant general recovered a little, and said in a broken voice, 'Why does a brave soldier like you commit these crimes?' Beckoning to his orderly to bring his horse, he mounted and rode off. It is needless to say that the other man also was pardoned, and in a few days the corporal was restored to his rank."

The fiery Craufurd could see a joke, strict as he was. An Irishman of his division was walking along a road with a pig at the end of a piece of string. Craufurd happened to ride up.

"Where did you steal that pig, you plundering rascal?"

"What pig, sir?" said the man innocently.

"Why, that pig behind you, you villain."

"Well then, I vow and protest, general," the soldier said, "it is scandalous to think what a wicked world we live in. Some blackguard, wishful to get me into trouble, has tied that baste to my cartouche box!"

Craufurd could not help laughing, and the man was spared his flogging.

After the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo James McGrigor, who had been with Wellington in India, arrived at Army Headquarters for duty as chief of the corps of surgeons and doctors. He was so successful at re-organising the medical services, the casualty clearing stations and the hospitals that in 1814 at the peace he received a pension and a knighthood on Wellington's recommendation. Marmont fell back on Salamanca. Wellington also retired behind the Coa, leaving a Spanish garrison in Rodrigo. He had in reality no in-

tention whatever of operating in that region, but he wished the French to think he had, while he secretly collected material and munitions down in the south for the investment of Badajoz. A covering force, 30,000 strong, under those two friends Hill and Graham, took up a position south-east of the fortress, where they held off a French army. Ere they departed on this duty both were invested by Wellington with the Order of the Bath. Before Soult could collect his scattered forces Wellington began the siege, on the 17th March.

In spite of his Chief's obvious attempt at secrecy, Picton could write to a friend in London under date of the 9th February:

"I think your reply will meet me at Badajoz, for we are making active though silent preparations to invest that place." It was a most reprehensible letter. It was sure to be handed round and discussed in club, coffee-house and tavern, wherever men congregate. The news would fly from lip to lip, and reach in time, probably very soon, the greedy ears of an agent of Napoleon. It was just the sort of thing about which Wellington was constantly complaining.

For the siege of Badajoz, Wellington had 21,000 men and a battering train of 52 guns, collected by the tireless Dickson, and including sixteen 24-pounder howitzers for firing the new shrapnel shell. These shells were of course circular, with a length of fuse attached. The garrison of the fortress, which was thought to be impregnable, was 5,000 strong, under General Philippon, an officer who displayed great bravery, skill and resource. Heavy rains hampered digging operations. The men were never dry, they

were ankle deep in mud coming over the fields, and were plastered from head to foot with dirt after a few hours in the trenches. Trench digging is always distasteful to British soldiers, and doubly so in such miserable conditions. The party that stormed the outwork of La Picurina on the 25th March were mightily glad to drag themselves out of the mud and rush the fort. On the 30th of the month Soult was reported to be moving north, and Marmont was threatening Ciudad Rodrigo. The cannonade became incessant. The French counter-battery work was very effective and was causing heavy casualties among the British gunners. Simmons of the 95th selected "forty as prime fellows as ever pulled trigger," and from daylight to dark he set them sniping at the embrasures, with considerable effect.

Zero hour, the moment for the assault, was fixed for 10 p.m. on the 6th April. That splendid division of Picton's, the Third, was to storm the castle, the Fourth, under Colville, and the indomitable Light Division, temporarily under the command of Colonel Andrew Barnard, was doomed for the breaches. The objective of the Fifth, led by General Leith, was a bastion, and that of a Portuguese brigade, the bridge-head. The night was dry and still and misty, and silent save for the chiming of the cathedral clock. The attacks were intended to be simultaneous, but by the fortune of war the Fifth Division was somewhat delayed, and a huge flare thrown out by the garrison revealed Picton's division ready drawn up. There was half an hour to go, but this discovery made an immediate advance imperative. Picton was

not to be seen, so General Kempt led forward the assault till he was wounded, and Picton took over. Again and again the ladders were cast down. Heavy stones, baulks of timber, hand-grenades were flung on to the heads of the desperate men attacking. The whole parapet was ablaze with musketry and the flash of guns. The situation looked ugly, when Colonel Ridge of the "Fighting 5th" rallied the breathless beaten soldiers to a final effort. Seizing a ladder, he reared it in a new place, and shouting to the men to follow by a miracle gained the top. Swarming up more ladders the infantry would not again be denied, and so by sheer determination the castle was won.

A young officer of the 45th, on reaching the castle tower, found the French flag still flying. He tore it down and hoisted his own red coat, stained with his wounds, in default of a British flag. A heavy gun was hauled to the gate leading to the town. A shot was fired through it, the gate was blown open, and the troops began to pour into the town. The French launched a counter-attack which was beaten off, but the heroic Ridge was killed. "Old Picton," as his men with a sort of rough affection called him, was hurt early in the day, but he stuck to his post, cheering and exhorting his soldiers. He gave a tip of a guinea to every survivor of the taking of the castle.

It is time to turn to that flaming volcano, the breach in the wall. The Light Division's storming party, led by Major O'Hare, gained the ditch, lowered the ladders, and began to descend. Fireballs and the hellish glare of a sprung mine revealed the French

on the ramparts and the British scrambling down the ladders. The "forlorn hope" rushed for the breach. They went to their deaths like men going home. At the crown of the breach was a row of sharp swords set in great heavy beams, chained together and embedded deep in the ruins. It was the final check to the charging columns. Time after time as the storming parties stumbled over the rubble of the breach they were swept away by musketry and grape. Every Frenchman had six loaded muskets to his hand. Officers and men died in heaps. Above the fearful din of battle, the sharp staccato of the small arms, the loud explosions of shells and bombs, and the cries and shouting, was heard the thin high note of the British bugles blowing. For five hours was spent the fierce unavailing valour of band after band, till at last the remnant stood, leaning on their muskets, panting and sobbing, with defeat staring them in the face. But their stubborn onslaught had helped the Third to win the castle, and they in their turn were helped. The Fifth Division had been successful on their front, and in the end they walked into the town with scarcely a shot fired.

Napier asks: "Who shall do justice to the bravery of the soldiers? the noble emulation of the officers? Who shall measure out the glory of Ridge, or of O'Hare, who perished on the breach at the head of the stormers, and with him nearly all the volunteers for that desperate service?" He adds: "When the extent of the night's havoc was made known to Lord Wellington, the firmness of his nature gave way for a moment, and the pride of conquest yielded to a



passionate burst of grief for the loss of his gallant soldiers."

Alas, the glory of that night of heroism and terror was dimmed. For two whole days the worst elements in the army once more gave themselves up to drunkenness, lust, murder, fire and loot. By no means all of the army let themselves go in this way. Determined efforts were made by many officers and men also to stop these wild excesses, but it needed the erection of a gallows in the market square and some hangings to restore order. While the orgies were at their height, two British officers, sword in hand, rescued General Philippon and his two daughters from the drunken, ragged, dancing devils that had been disciplined British soldiers. And here took place the great romance of the war. The day after the assault two officers of the Rifles were walking along the street, when two Spanish ladies, the younger a lovely girl of fourteen, ran up to them and begged for their help. Their dresses were torn, their ears bleeding where their ear-rings had been dragged off, and to escape worse things they implored protection. One of the officers was Captain Harry Smith. He married the girl, and she shared his fortune of war and all the hardships of the campaign until the peace. Afterwards in the wars in India and South Africa she remained with her husband, and the dangers and privations he endured, she endured also. He never failed in his duty, and she would not have had it otherwise. The soldiers of the Light Division loved her. Rough as many of the poor gallant fellows were, there was not a man who would not have given his life for her, and

by the officers she was adored. In the retreat from Burgos she had a little tent, pitched perforce on soaking wet ground. Not only was she frequently drenched with rain, but she forded a deep river with the troops. Her name was Juana Maria de los Dolores de Leon. Her husband was later to become General Sir Harry Smith, victor of Aliwal, and Governor of the Cape. Juana was the Ladysmith of the little town in Natal of that name, made famous for its defence by Sir George White in the South African War, 1899-1900.

In the taking of Badajoz the French lost their garrison and supplies, and the British, owing to lack of time and many of the necessary materials for a siege, lost 5,000 men. Lowry Cole, invalided home, said when he heard the news of Badajoz that he had lost almost every friend he had. The next move on the board was with Wellington. He sent orders to General Sir Rowland Hill to surprise Almaraz on the Tagus, and Hill carried out the operation with skill and success. Here Marmont had built a bridge of boats with a fortified bridgehead, for the bridges had long been destroyed, and the banks were rugged and steep. Hill had 6,000 men with a few field guns and howitzers. He could not transport his artillery, but he marched to within six miles of Almaraz, and by making his men scramble over the mountain passes at night took the position in flank and by surprise.

At dawn on the 19th May an attack was suddenly launched on the forts by means of scaling ladders, still stained, it is said, with the blood of Badajoz. The assault was pressed home with such determination that the garrison fled across the bridge, casting adrift

the pontoons. Slipping off their heavy kilts some soldiers of the 92nd swam out, secured the bridge, and the pursuit crossed. The works were destroyed, so was the bridge; the guns were rendered useless and flung into the deep river. Speed was the cause of the success of this brilliant little action. Hill was undoubtedly a very able officer. His despatch to Wellington was a model of calmness, conciseness, clarity and generosity. The reduction of the forts and the destruction of the pontoon bridge cut the communications between Soult and Marmont, while the rebuilding of the Alcantara bridge shortened the distance between Hill and Wellington. Wellington's comment on this occasion was, "Hill has done it well and ably." In all the operations undertaken by Hill, the latter seems to have correctly interpreted the spirit of his Chief's instructions.

In June, 1812, Wellington's allied army of 43,000 men marched for Salamanca. It was not until this year that his cavalry was strong enough for him to come down to the open plains and fight. He stormed the forts covering the bridge at Salamanca, and then for a month there followed a marching and manœuvring by the two armies of Wellington and Marmont. Concerning these doings Warre remarked, "I suppose there never was a more interesting or beautiful sight than that of two hostile armies of upwards of 35,000 men each moving parallel within a mile and a half of each other, and often within cannon range." He might have added within half musket shot, for on at least one day the hostile columns were racing for the crossing of a river within shouting distance,

amid the dust and heat, while the King's German cavalry, splendid big men on big-boned horses, rode between. The incessant marching in the summer heat was very trying to the troops.

During this period both Graham and Picton went on home leave owing to ill-health. Pakenham took over the famous Third Division. He proved himself worthy of it, and it did not fail him. In the previous autumn he had been in charge of the Fusilier Brigade in Lowry Cole's Fourth Division. He was now about to make his reputation, at the age of thirty-four. Picton was suffering from his Badajoz injury and from fever. He went to Cheltenham Spa, and the award of a K.C.B. no doubt helped the cure. Graham, it will be remembered, had a painful affliction in one of his eyes, for which he had been under the care of Dr. McGrigor. He left for England to obtain specialist treatment. Major Warre writes of him, "One of the most excellent worthy men I know anywhere, and like Hill, beloved by everybody . . . a most excellent zealous soldier."

There were, of course, amid the hardships of the marches, brief and rare intervals of rest. The weather was dry, rations came up regularly, wine was so plentiful that it was difficult to keep the troops sober. Napier says: "On both sides the soldiers, passing the Douro in groups, held amicable intercourse, conversing of the battles that were yet to be fought. The camps on the banks of the Douro seemed at times to belong to one army, so difficult is it to make brave men to hate each other."

During the night of the 21st July, it was learned

that Marmont was about to be reinforced. Already Wellington had been outmarched and outflanked, and he resolved to retreat unless he saw a good opening the next day. The opportunity was given him. Like lightning he took it. Lightning filled the plain that night, the whole country was ablaze with it, the flashes and the thunder and the toriential rain stampeded the horses of the 5th Dragoon Guards. Miles away the dust of the British wagons retiring along the road to Ciudad Rodrigo was seen next morning by Marmont. He detached two divisions from his left to cut off the British retreat, and left a gap between his left and centre. Wellington gave his field glass to an A.D.C. while he attacked some cold beef. After a few minutes the officer said, "The enemy is in motion, my lord."

"Very well, watch what they are doing."

Two minutes later:

"I think they are extending to their left, sir."

"The devil they are! Give me the glass."

Wellington rode off to tell Pakenham to attack. They shook hands. At five o'clock in the afternoon Pakenham struck. He fell upon the leading division under Thomières and crushed it. Two batteries of artillery took the French in flank, while the infantry rolled up the strung-out and unformed columns. The attack was supported on its left by the Fourth and Fifth Divisions in line, with the Sixth and Seventh in reserve. Wellington told Colonel Le Marchant that Pakenham's success largely depended on the energetic taking of opportunities by his cavalry. The dry grass was afire, and amid the thick smoke Le Marchant charged with his nine squadrons of 800

horse at 5,000 French infantry who were coming up to the support of Thomières's broken division. The sun was in the Frenchmen's eyes, they were stifled and blinded by clouds of dust and smoke. They fired vaguely into the cloud. Before they could reload, out of the gloom came Le Marchant's men riding furiously among them. A whole battalion was cut up and dispersed by the terrible shining swords. On went the horsemen exulting. They smashed another formation. Then they came up against a third, which had had time to prepare for their reception. Once more the dragoons burst through the cloud. At ten paces distance the French fired their volley. Fully a quarter of the galloping squadrons dropped, but the impetus of the charge, though checked by fallen horses and fallen men, carried the dragoons on to the bayonets. Hacking and stabbing the British and French fought it out, amid the flash and roar of cannon, the screams of the maddened horses, the gasping shouts of men as they hewed or lunged for dear life in the choking smoke and dust. Fighting manfully the French were overborne and broke. A party collected in a wood, where they tried to make a stand. Le Marchant gathered up a handful of his scattered men and himself led a charge. The French fired and ran. Le Marchant dropped from his horse dead.

Stapleton Cotton and his staff reorganised his heavy swordsmen, and led them forward to break up another formation and to capture five guns, while the Germans and the light cavalry swept on.

Le Marchant was a Channel Islander, tall and strong and resolute. The old Duke of York, with whom Le

Marchant had been closely associated in the matter of Army reform, is said to have shed tears on hearing of his death. A pension was settled on his children, and a monstrous marble tribute to his memory was erected in St. Paul's.

Meanwhile a desperate struggle was going on in the centre. The Fourth Division had been checked, Pack's Portuguese had gone down bravely fighting, General Cole of the Fourth and General Leith of the Fifth had both been wounded, and the battle became one of reserves. In the end General Clinton and the Sixth Division was brought up with decisive effect in the dusk of the evening, and Wellington had won his most skilful battle. It was said that he had beaten 40,000 men in forty minutes, by throwing Pakenham into the gap. Wellington spoke highly of Pakenham's conduct at Salamanca. "Pakenham may not be the brightest genius, but my partiality for him does not lead me astray when I tell you he is one of the best we have."

The allied losses were about 5,000, those of the French nearly three times as many. The casualties were high among senior officers. Stapleton Cotton was shot through the arm by a Portuguese sentry whose challenge he had disregarded, and Beresford was wounded by a bullet in the chest. An assistant surgeon to a foot regiment was keeping close behind the line in order to form a sort of advanced dressing station. He was well mounted, with two Spanish saddle-bags containing dressings and instruments, and a skinful of country wine. An officer in Portuguese uniform galloped towards the medico, shouting, "A

surgeon, a British surgeon!" It was Colonel Warre, Marshal Beresford's aide-de-camp. "Follow me," he said, and they spurred on together. The marshal was lying beside a desperately wounded Portuguese sergeant, in a covered wagon on the road. The surgeon noted that he wore a blue coat and a white waistcoat. He had a bullet wound below the left breast. The surgeon inserted his forefinger ("that best of probes," as he says!), and traced the passage of the ball round to the back. "General," he said, "your wound is not mortal." Beresford took no notice of the remark, but asked, "How goes the day?" "Well," was the reply, "the enemy has begun to give way." "Ha!" said the marshal, "it has been a bloody day."

The marshal was turned upon his side. The Portuguese sergeant called loudly upon Our Lady and the doctor, who told him gently to keep quiet as his general was lying wounded by his side. "Sir," said the marshal, "if that poor fellow's wounds require dressing more than mine, dress him first." "His legs are smashed," replied the surgeon, "nothing but amputation could help him, and I have not got instruments for that." The surgeon began to cut out the bullet. "Cut boldly, doctor, I never fainted in my life." When the ball had been extracted, and the patient bound up, he asked, "What next?" "You must be bled when you go down the line, sir. I must now go forward to my regiment."

Warre managed to get the marshal back to Salamanca by about eleven o'clock that night. Beresford suffered much pain from this wound. Inflammation and discharge of pus lasted for many



weeks, until some one discovered that a piece of cloth from his coat had been driven into the wound. After recovery, he went again to Lisbon, for the Portuguese authorities, always lazy and always jealous, were impairing the moral of their fine army by neglect in recruiting, supply and clothing.

Wellington entered Madrid after an uninterrupted march, and remained there for some months. He and his men received a rapturous welcome. The people were wild with joy, women kissing the officers and nearly pulling them off their horses. When darkness fell, there was a glare of light from thousands of candles and torches. Clean and comfortable billets were provided, but the population was in great distress from want of food, and something like famine conditions prevailed among the poorer classes. The British troops set up soup kitchens for their relief. The Third Division, and in particular the 45th Regiment, took the lead in the good work. Simmons of the 95th relates that "a bull-fight was given in honour of Lord Wellington's entering Madrid. I was present at it. The bulls were most tremendous animals, and the men that attacked them displayed the greatest intrepidity and courage. The poor horses suffered the most."

The French retired on Burgos. The town was occupied by the allied army in September, but all attempts by the latter to take the castle of Burgos failed. There was no transport to bring up the heavy guns. The crack divisions of the army, the Third, the Fourth and the Light, were in Madrid. In view of these facts and of very heavy French reinforcements

Wellington on the 21st October determined to retreat, and join Hill, whom he met near Salamanca, with the rest of the army. Before leaving he invested Sir Stapleton Cotton, the cavalry commander, with the Order of the Bath for his services at Salamanca fight. Though competent enough, Cotton was sound rather than brilliant. He held his place partly owing to his long association with Wellington, since the days in India, and also to the fact that he was absolutely trustworthy. A week after the retreat began Lowry Cole rejoined his division, and Sir Edward Paget came out from England to take the place of Graham, who, it will be remembered, had gone home suffering from ophthalmia. Paget was very short-sighted himself, and it is probably due to this disability that he was taken prisoner in a wood near Ciudad Rodrigo near the end of the retreat.

"Farewell and adieu to you, ladies of Spain." Good-bye to the soft billets and the pleasant society of Madrid. The army had to take the road again, in the wet and mud and hardship of a retreat. A certain Spanish beauty refused to be parted from her English lover. He was an officer in the Portuguese Caçadores, and he put her on his horse and brought her along. She did not realise the miseries in front of her. The camping grounds were pools of water. There was sometimes no bread, biscuit or flour, only a lump of tough beef to be grilled on a sword point, or acorns gathered in the woods and roasted. The rain poured down. The men were weary, sullen, cold and hungry, many were barefoot and sometimes up to their knees in mire. Women and sick men actually stuck in the

mud. If a baggage animal fell, it had to be abandoned. In many units discipline was almost gone. At the wine vaults of Torquemada thousands of men were drunk and insubordinate. Only the Brigade of Guards and the Light Division kept their discipline intact. One of that division notes in his diary: "Extremely cold and windy, raining. Had some difficulty to find wood for a fire. Benumbed with cold, and obliged to smoke my pipe and walk about, praying for a fine day to dry my clothes."

It was not until the weary march was over and they had reached Ciudad Rodrigo that the wretched weather cleared, and fuel and rations became normal again. Then came Wellington's famous Order of the Day.<sup>1</sup> In it he said that the army was undefeated and not pursued with any vigour, marches were short and halts were long. Yet gross indiscipline and disorder occurred, and excesses were committed which reflected gravely on the officers, who had neglected their duty. Active service was the time above all others when march discipline must be maintained, arms inspected, and care taken of the soldiers' rations, dinners, well-being, and soldier-like conduct. Wellington's exasperation is easily understood, and is justifiable, but the point of view of his regimental officers was rather different.

Officers as well as soldiers had no covering except the sky. They lay in the open, their clothes saturated with rain. Half the men and officers were without shoes, without anything to eat, or without their

<sup>1</sup> Wellington's Order is printed in an appendix. The reader is urged not to neglect it. It is full of interest.

cooking pots. The army's rations arrived alive, usually after midnight, and the camp-kettles reached the troops an hour after the poor famished brutes had been knocked on the head. "Each man obtained his portion of the quivering flesh, but before any fires could be relighted, the order for march arrived, and the men received their meat dripping with water, but little, if anything, warmer than when it was delivered over to them by the butcher. The soldiers, drenched with wet, greatly fatigued, nearly naked, and more than half asleep, were obliged either to throw away the meat, or put it with their biscuits into their haversacks, which from constant use, without any means of cleaning them, more resembled a beggarman's wallet than any part of the appointments of a soldier. In a short time the wet meat completely destroyed the bread, which became a perfect paste, and the blood which oozed from the undressed beef gave so bad a taste to the bread that many could not eat it. Neither the cavalry nor the artillery horses could get any forage and a number died on this night."

So ran the tale of an officer in a line regiment. There seems little doubt that the commissariat arrangements had broken down. It is therefore hardly surprising that the army resented Wellington's sweeping condemnation in his Order. The regimental officers were not altogether responsible. The narrator continues: "The officers divided the misery of the retreat with their men, and it is well known that many of them had scarcely a covering to their backs. Scarcely a subaltern in the army had a dollar in his pocket, the troops being four months in arrear of pay; but

even supposing he had money in abundance, what use could he make of it? There was nothing to be had for love or money. We had no money, and few of us were inclined to make love; but even if we were, there was no one (the worst of it) to make love to!"

About 9,000 men, including Spaniards and Portuguese, were lost in the retreat. It was not a creditable affair, but here at last on the frontier was rest, refreshment, re-equipment and reinforcement. For the officers at least there was relaxation and sport, acting, dancing, hunting, shooting, and coursing. The field sports were greatly to the liking of that English squire, General Sir Rowland Hill. He kept a pack of foxhounds, entertained liberally, and had some feminine society at his mess table. One of his aides-de-camp had his wife with him, and she usually dined with the general and his staff. While Wellington went south to Cadiz, Hill was temporarily in command of the army.

So passed the winter of 1812.

# X

## *Over the Pyrenees*

IN A LITTLE BOOK called *The Subaltern*, in which Mr. G. R. Gleig describes his adventures with the Peninsular Army in 1813-14, he says "that the years which were spent amid the toils and dangers of active warfare are those on which I continue to look back as the happiest of my life." The book was not written until 1845, and some allowance may be made for the healing lapse of time, but most soldiers who have seen active service will know what he means. The reaction afforded by a respite from the toils and dangers, the periods of rest, the feeling of health and well-being, the youth and carelessness, and especially the trusty comradeship, are all factors which make for pure happiness. If a personal reminiscence may be forgiven, the writer remembers with joy the tented camp in an apple orchard, at that time free from aerial bombing, away behind the Somme battlefields, the talks and al fresco meals, the open-air concerts, the long rides on the transport horses over the wide open autumn fields of France, with the red sun setting through the haze of the dust of our passing. Simmons, describing a night bivouac in a letter home, says, "Campaigning is the life for me. I have never felt such happiness since I was a soldier." A mood of the moment, no doubt, but still sincere. If war in

the future is to be nothing but unrelieved horror and beastliness, the soldiers will all go mad.

Early in 1813, Napoleon withdrew thousands upon thousands of veteran troops to Germany, whither he had retreated after his disastrous Russian adventure. That disaster was partly due to the "Spanish ulcer" which drained away so much of his strength, but it is also true that if he had been victorious in Russia the allied forces in Spain would have been utterly overwhelmed by his returning legions. As it was, he still had vast armies in Spain.

Wellington made no premature move. He did not stir until his troops had been thoroughly refreshed by a long rest, and month by month fresh drafts were arriving for his depleted battalions. New units also came out from England, notably the Household Cavalry, the Life Guards and the Horse Guards Blue. As the French strength declined, so the allied power was waxing greater. The efficiency, discipline, and spirit of both British and Portuguese were restored, malingerers were ousted from hospital and depot, a primitive kind of field ambulance was instituted and permanent base hospitals also. The Spanish forces were put under Wellington's supreme control, by which their efficiency was doubled. A pontoon train was formed, lighter camp kettles were issued to the troops, and new carts and tents. In the past immensely heavy great cooking pots had been carried by pack-mules, which often arrived hours after the troops had halted. Now lighter utensils, one to every six men, were carried in turn on the men's backs. An adequate number of supply and forage mules

were hired at a dollar (5/-) a day each, and a muleteer to every five or six animals, also at a dollar a day. Altogether, the army was in fine fettle by the spring.

A day in March of this year was devoted by Wellington to the honour of General Lowry Cole, the tall, handsome and gallant commander of the Fourth Division. He writes as follows:

“Frenada, March 7th, 1813,  
5 p.m.

“MY DEAR COLE,—The post has just arrived and brought the enclosed letters to announce that you are made Knight of the Bath, of which I received an intimation some time ago. I beg leave to congratulate you on this well-deserved honour. The box containing the Insignia is here, and I will invest you with them with the greatest satisfaction on any day you will fix upon to come over here. We are not very roomy at Frenada, but we ought to have present the General, Officers and Staff of your Division and some of the Commanding Officers of regiments. I am not quite certain if it would not be best to inform headquarters at Ciudad Rodrigo for the occasion.

“Ever yours most sincerely,

“WELLINGTON.”

The party was held at Ciudad Rodrigo, and Colin Campbell was in charge of the arrangements. The building in which the festivities were held had the familiar war-time aspect. A sentry guarded a large hole in the dining-room floor with a mat flung over it. In the ballroom yards of roof were missing. The



cooked food, wine and silver came from Frenada, 17 miles away, the crockery and glass from Almeida, and the turkeys had arrived after a forty-mile journey. Wellington, in all his orders, dined, danced, stayed to supper, and then rode back to Frenada.

Other familiar faces were seen once more with the Army. Picton reappeared as Sir Thomas Picton, K.C.B., completely cured. Beresford rejoined. Pakenham was promoted Adjutant-General, and Graham had returned from sick leave in January. Those two friends and first-rate soldiers, white-haired Graham and "Farmer" Hill, commanded the left and right wings of the army in the forthcoming operations, two trusted lieutenants who never failed their Chief. Wellington moved in May. He ordered Graham to advance out of Portugal to the Esla river through the mountains of *Tras-os-Montes*, to turn the line of the Douro and the right wing of the French, and cut the royal road to France. Graham had the First and Fifth Divisions with cavalry and guns and Portuguese and Spanish contingents. Wellington himself with the centre and Hill on the right went by way of Salamanca across the Douro to join him. Twenty thousand Spaniards under Castaños were available, and if the French communications were threatened, the French must either withdraw or fight. Either course suited Wellington's plans. He would bring the allies forward on a wide front and drive the enemy to the Pyrenees. Full-throated cheers were raised by his marching veterans as they crossed the frontier stream, and he, their Chief, rose in his stirrups and waved a farewell to Portugal.

King Joseph, surprised by Graham's march, fell back to the Ebro, and then took up a position behind the narrow, swift and difficult river Zadorra, covering Vitoria. The Anglo-Portuguese army struggled through the defiles and over the steep passes of that wild mountainous country, the gunners straining at the wheels, the infantry slipping and sliding over the stones. They were heartened by roll of drum and clash of cymbal as they emerged into the basin of Vitoria.

The city was set on an eminence in a hollow ringed round with high hills. It was rich and prosperous, famous for its iron mines, and from its broad streets could be seen the romantic beauty of its setting. Its basin was some ten miles long and eight miles broad, covered with cornfields, woods, ditches, vineyards. Right through it ran Joseph's only practicable line of retreat, the royal road to France.

In a campaign of six weeks Wellington moved nearly one hundred thousand men six hundred miles. He crossed six great rivers, won a crushing victory, invested two fortresses, and hurled a like number of seasoned French troops into the Pyrenees. Here was no ordinary general, no lack of competent officers or brave men. The allied army struck on the 21st June. Dawn broke with a misty rain, but as the sun rose it shone out upon a glorious morning. General Graham, a brilliant improvisator, was detailed to effect the crossing of the Zadorra by the two northerly bridges. Wellington himself sent the Third, Fourth, Seventh and the Light Divisions against two bridges in the centre, while that steady soldier Hill, with the Second Division beneath his hand and a strong force

of Spaniards and Portuguese, was to win two more bridges on the right. Hill was completely successful, and pushing on he turned the French left.

Meanwhile, a sturdy Spanish peasant came and told the Commander-in-Chief that the bridge of Tres Puentes on his front was unguarded, and offered himself as guide. Wellington immediately sent the nearest troops, which happened to be Kempt's brigade of the Light Division. In this brigade were included Colonel Andrew Barnard's Rifles. The whole brigade crossed, running over the narrow bridge, and ascending a steep rise on the opposite bank, the men lay down just below the crest. Having come so far without meeting any opposition, Kempt passed the word to the 13th Hussars to come over, which they did one by one at a gallop. The infantry had just time to recover their breath, when they perceived the bayonets of the Third and Seventh Divisions glittering above the standing corn. They were advancing upon the Mendoza bridge a few hundred yards to their left. The enemy were lining the bank of the river to oppose them, the same bank whereon were the Rifles. Colonel Barnard ran along with his men and took the French in flank with a furious fire. So the bridge was won.

Wellington had another piece of luck, of which he promptly took advantage. In front of him was some rising ground known as the Englishmen's Hill<sup>1</sup> which appeared to be lightly held, if at all. The Rifles and

<sup>1</sup> The Englishmen's Hill was so called in memory of a fight in earlier days. Two knights of the Black Prince's army, Sir Thomas and Sir William Felton, held it with 200 brave souls. Surrounded by Don Tello with 6,000 men, they fought it out to the death.

Picton's Third Division were sent to it, and by a sudden rush made themselves masters of the position. "Old Picton," wearing a blue coat and a round hat, rode at the head of his Division, swearing roundly and shouting to his men, "Come on, ye damned rascals, come on, ye fighting villains!" The whole of the centre pushed on. For miles the action became a running fight amid clouds of dust and smoke, with three divisions in line sweeping towards Vitoria. At six o'clock in the evening the French made a last stand a mile from the city. The Third Division, hammered by a concentrated fire of eighty guns, was checked. Lowry Cole's division saved the situation. Leading his men in person, with his Irish élan and fire, Cole seized the hill on the French left. The French crumbled and broke. The gunners left their guns, and King Joseph Bonaparte's retreat stampeded along the Pampeluna road, for the royal road to Bayonne was choked with fugitives and with a hopeless traffic jam. Moreover, Graham was astride it. The Pampeluna road was not open long. Troops retreating swarmed upon it, baggage, guns and wagons poured on to it. The result was that it was completely choked barely a mile from the city. The drivers, thinking that one pair of legs was worth two pairs of wheels, left it all to the pursuers. Shortly after noon Graham had attacked. His progress was held up until Wellington's success in the centre became apparent, but as he pushed on, the French general joined King Joseph along the Pampeluna road.

Everything was abandoned, and the French army for a time became a mob. For miles the roads were

littered with the ruins of a great army. Limbers, wagons and carts were wrecked and overturned. Guns, their carriages smashed, pointed uselessly to the skies. Powder, shot, stores, pictures, silk dresses, plate, millions of money, plunder of every description, were strewn everywhere, with dead or dying horses. Herds of cattle and sheep wandered over the countryside, while the camp-followers and populace, many soldiers and even a few officers, swarmed out to loot. A young officer, but an old campaigner wrote: "We had fought over twenty miles of ground. I seated myself by a fire with the officers of the company, and was fortunate enough to get part of a ham and some claret which one of the soldiers had taken from a cart belonging to the enemy. I never ate with a better relish in my life."

The Horse Artillery by all accounts did excellent work. Their horses were in splendid condition, and they had need to be, for the roads were sometimes knee-deep in mud. Cross-country they went, over hedges and ditches, along muddy field tracks and woodland drives, and they never failed the infantry. The commandant of the R.H.A., to whom much of the credit is due, was Colonel Augustus Simon Frazer. The son of an army officer, he began his education at Edinburgh High School, but at what seems nowadays the tender age of fourteen he was entered as a cadet at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, and gazetted a second lieutenant in the gunners three years later. He saw service in Flanders and Buenos Aires, and joined the Peninsular Army in 1812. He was commanding the Royal Horse Artillery in the very next year,

and was given a brevet lieutenant-colonelcy for his services at Vitoria. Wounded at Bayonne in 1814, he came home to receive a knighthood.

The pursuit was not pushed through with the vigour that might have been expected, but the allied armies were carried forward to the Bidassoa, a stream which divides Spain from France, and winds through lofty mountains. Here and there is space enough for rich fields, meadows and farms, though generally the river runs swift and clear through steep and rugged hills, with cascades tumbling down their slopes into it. In places, such as San Marcial, the heights rise abruptly out of the bed of the river.

On the 1st July, Soult took over the command of the French armies. Like Foch, he had been given a lost battle, but unlike Foch, he was not able to restore it. Yet in Soult, Wellington found a foeman worthy of him. Meanwhile on the eastern coast of Spain disaster had overtaken the allied arms. Sir John Murray had failed at Tarragona, had gone home to face a court-martial, and had been superseded by Lord William Bentinck. General Graham also failed in his first assault on San Sebastian, where he did not display his usual vigour and generalship.

San Sebastian was built on a low sandy isthmus formed by the harbour on one side and the river Urumea on the other. At the end thereof stands the castle, on the summit of a rock rising four hundred feet sheer out of the sea, which washes it on three sides. Nearly 10,000 men were engaged in this siege, including the Fifth Division under General Oswald, a party of seamen landed from H.M.S. *Surveillante*,

and one hundred regular sappers, now for the first time used in the Peninsula. A siege train of forty guns was under the command of Colonel Dickson.

Major Smith, the engineer officer in charge, proposed to make a breach in the town defence with guns from the sandhills over the Urumea, and to take the defenders of the breach in flank with other guns on the opposite or left bank. The attack was to take place in daylight. The plan was sound, but unfortunately was not followed. The works and suburb of San Bartolomeo on the mainland, south of the neck of the isthmus, were stormed by an Anglo-Portuguese detachment. Trenches were dug on the isthmus and a breach opened by the guns. During the night of the 24th July, 2,000 men of the Fifth Division filed into the trenches. From these trenches to the point of attack the distance was 300 yards or more. The night was pitch dark, though daybreak was not far away. The men struggled up to the breach, finding their way by the fitful glare of some burning houses, slithering over the rocks slippery with seaweed, stumbling and splashing through the pools left by the tide. They were shelled by the distant castle, grape-shot and bombs and musket balls smote them from front and flank. Devastating also was the misdirected fire from their own batteries across the Urumea. Regimental officers strove heroically to rally their men, but the strain reached breaking point. The loss was heavy, and the survivors finished back in their trenches. Cool and skilful soldier as he was, Graham cannot escape responsibility for the change of plan that ended in disaster.

Graham reported the action in a despatch to Wellington, who immediately came on the scene. He ordered further siege operations to be suspended for a while, and it was not until the end of August that activities were resumed. At the second attempt Graham succeeded, though he largely owed his success to a lucky accident.

The command of the sea was not complete, and while the allies received guns, stores, and ammunition by water, the garrison also was supplied by the same road. The little harbour of Pasages, to the east of San Sebastian, was the allies' new advanced base. There is a narrow gut between overhanging cliffs, and a harbour basin within. The new drafts noticed the houses with their projecting balconies and steps up to them, and the jalousied windows, the picturesque Basque dress, the strange swarthy complexions, the flashing eyes and teeth. Wooded and grassy hills lay around, and in the distance brooded the mighty Pyrenees.

San Sebastian was immensely strong, and its capture a difficult task indeed. The castle, high in air, commanded the whole town and its approaches. The tents of the besiegers were hidden in ravines and orchards well away on the farther side of the river, and there were communication trenches out to the lines. The private soldiers hated trenches and trench digging, and the sorties by the garrison which disturbed their rest. There was always great resentment at the hardships of a siege. "We'll make Johnny pay for it," they said.

The siege train was formidable for those days,



consisting of sixty pieces and including several 64-pounders and twenty mortars. By sunset on the 30th August, a new breach was made in the rampart on the side that looked towards the river. Here was no ditch or slope, but just a solid wall more than 20 feet high. There was a hellish din, masonry tumbling down with a crash, guns and mortars firing, but the rampart was immensely strong and the breach was not really effective. Moreover there was a curtain wall behind. Zero hour for the assault was at low tide, at noon on the 30th August. The assaulting troops were in light marching order, with their packs left behind. Time lagged. The officers were looking at their watches, the men were strung up to the high excitement before action. Soldiers leant on their firelocks in the trenches, officers on their swords. The engineer officers were exposing themselves while inspecting the breaches. Their commandant, Colonel Sir Richard Fletcher, the designer of the Lines of Torres Vedras, was shot through the head and killed just before the troops went over the top. The hour struck. The attackers crossed the fallen river, scrambled up the difficult heap of rubble. A crowd of eager men swarmed up over the ruins of the wall and reached the crown of the breach. Graham watching saw the smoke blow away, and the stormers drop like stones from the wall.

Again and again they were beaten back by grenade, grape-shot and musket, again and again they desperately came on. Graham thought of a daring expedient. He called Colonel Dickson, and said that if the assaulting troops were to lie down at the foot of the breach,

the siege guns could batter at the curtain wall over their heads. Was it practicable? Could it be done? This use of artillery is familiar enough to-day, but then, considering the lack of precision of the guns, it meant a severe test of the moral of the infantry. Dickson thought it was feasible, and Graham answered for his soldiers. For half an hour the heavy cannon opened fire with round shot against the curtain. The infantry did not flinch, but lay as still as their dead. Presently one of the British mortar shells burst on a train to a mine. The mine was intended to go up if and when the allies succeeded in climbing the wall. Instead it cleared a space and blew up the French grenadiers. There was a flash, a roar, a cloud of smoke and dust, a moment's awestruck silence. Then whistles blew and bugles rang out. With a hoarse cheer and a rush the assailants clambered up over the tumbled broken masonry, and fought desperately with the stubborn defenders. They poured into the town, to be met with barricades in the streets. It was hand to hand and house to house. Not till the evening was the town in the possession of the storming troops.<sup>1</sup>

As night fell, it was made hideous by terrible scenes of plunder and destruction. Once more the valour of the men was stained by the sack of the town. The houses were lofty, the streets narrow, like the Old Town in Edinburgh, and fire swept through them. The dead, the dying and the drunken were lying heaped in the streets amid the loot. Again the

<sup>1</sup> Portuguese troops, led by Lieutenant-Colonel McBean and Major Snodgrass, had carried a smaller breach.

officers seemed powerless. A Portuguese adjutant was shot dead, a British staff officer barely escaped with his life. All that can be said is that very many soldiers took no part in these hateful doings, and were ashamed of them.

The castle surrendered on the 8th September, and when the Bidassoa was crossed early in October and the allied army was on French ground, Graham went home. His right eye was worrying him again, and his general health was not good. His retirement was regretted. Colonel Frazer said of him, "a most friendly fine old man, and as active as any of us." Napoleon at St. Helena referred to him as "that daring old man." Sir John Hope, his cousin, took over from him as left corps commander. Hope had commanded at Coruña after the death of Sir John Moore, and was senior to Wellington during the first part of the Peninsular War. When Wellington was made a field-marshal after the battle of Vitoria, Hope offered to serve under him. The former gladly accepted, saying that Hope was the ablest officer in the army.

In the battles of the Pyrenees, Wellington frustrated Soult's attempts to relieve San Sebastian and Pampeluna. He stood on that lofty wall of mountains a conqueror. His men and officers trusted him and would follow his star. The divisions of Picton and Cole were drawn up in line on the heights. Suddenly they saw Wellington riding towards them. A cheer of defiance and pride in their leader rolled from end to end of that long martial line.

The troops fought and marched in deep stony gullies, among oak-covered foothills or on the mighty

cloud-capped peaks. From these great heights they saw, as the cloud curtain lifted, "the vasty fields of France" swimming below them in the haze, a beautiful well-wooded country dotted with towns and villages, intersected by white roads and flashing rivers, as far as their eyes could see. Far and away beneath lay the toy town of St. Jean de Luz, and the blue sea flecked with sails of British ships. Eagles soared overhead, and vultures and kites were watching for their grisly prey.

In the Pyrenees, during nine days of August, ten actions were fought, in which Hope and Hill and Cole and Picton all played their parts. On one occasion Soult was very nearly cut off. He was ignorant of the near presence of the allied forces and of the out-flanking movements that were going on, but he was saved by three plundering British soldiers who wandered down into the valley in search of unconsidered trifles worth snapping up. They were promptly seen and taken. Soon after the drums began to beat and the French hastily decamped. Again at the Yanzi Bridge Soult only extricated himself with difficulty and loss, after the Light Division under Alten had marched for nineteen consecutive hours over the mountains, and fought a battle, weak and fainting as they were, after two days without rations and after their tremendous march.

At least one British officer went fishing in the Bidassoa at the time when it divided the two armies. He tells how he waded far out into the stream, on the opposite bank of which the enemy's picquets were posted. The French soldiers came down in

crowds to watch, and excitedly to point out pools and eddies where the best sport was to be had. Curiously enough, he found his scarlet jacket his best passport. Wearing that, he was in no danger of being shot at.

On the 7th October, the army's left wing was flung across the Bidassoa. It was composed of Graham's First and Fifth Divisions and Spaniards, and the French opposed to him were soon in disorderly retreat down the royal road to Bayonne. It is not proposed to go into the details of this Pyrenean fighting, but two incidents may be recorded. That eccentric adventurer Downie was now a Spanish brigadier. Two of his battalions were held up by a rampart of tree trunks, behind which the French were keeping up a heavy fire. Downie was doing his best to urge them on, with no success. Just then a young officer of the 43rd, named Havelock, rode up from General Alten to ask how the Spaniards were doing. With a single glance he took in the situation. He waved his hat, called on the men to follow, set his horse at the obstacle, and with a mighty leap was over it among the enemy. The Spanish soldiers tore after him, shouting, "*El chico blanco!* The fair boy, follow the little fair boy!" With one rush they broke through the enemy and tumbled them down the hill.

The other incident deals with the enforced loss of good spirits. Urogne, a French frontier village, was taken by storm over the barricades. A good store of brown bread was found there, and several casks of brandy. The casks were instantly knocked on the head and the spirit poured out into the roadway, to prevent the men getting drunk. If they were drunk they went

looting and were completely out of hand. The spirit of plunder showed itself as the army crossed into France, and Wellington took stern measures with the delinquents. He also put several officers under arrest and sent them home, announcing that if he had five times as many men he would not venture to invade France unless marauding were put down.

For many weeks Soult had been entrenching and fortifying the line of the river Nivelle, but in these wars, and with such infantry, the attack proved stronger than the defence. Now, not even the high explosive barrage can easily shake determined defenders protected by dug-outs and wire, and freely armed with machine-guns. Then, the defenders, with no wire and armed only with muskets, the loading of which was a long and intricate performance, could probably only fire one volley ere the attackers were upon them. Victory would rest with those most resolute with the bayonet.

On the 10th November, the allies began the passage of the river, which is about the width of the Isis at Oxford. It is bridged, and fordable at low water near St. Jean de Luz. Marshal Beresford, with the Third, Fourth, and Sixth Divisions and Spanish and Portuguese, commanded, at any rate nominally, the centre. Hill had the right wing, and Hope the left, with the First, the Fifth and allied troops. Cole was rather bitter at being in Beresford's corps. He had not forgotten Beresford at Albuera. Writing to his brother after the Nivelle fight, he says:

"This will all go to the credit of Marshal Sir William Beresford, who, proposing to go home this

winter and wishing to go there with *éclat*, asked for a command. Lord Wellington, not knowing how to refuse him, to my great annoyance gave him the nominal command of three divisions, the Third, the Fourth and the Sixth—nominal, for we received our orders direct from the Quartermaster-General, and the Marshal never gave me an order during the action. His aim is no doubt a peerage, to which I have no objection if he does not continue in command of the Fourth Division.”

The Light Division, under Alten, “the flower of the Army, the finest infantry in the world,” was under Lord Wellington’s own hand. Years afterwards Wellington said: “The Light, Third and Fourth Divisions were the élite of my army, but the Light had this peculiar perfection. No matter what was the arduous service they were employed on, when I rode up next day I still found a *division*. They never lost half the men other divisions did.” Sir Charles Alten, though without a touch of Craufurd’s genius, was a competent, conscientious man whose great merit in his Chief’s eyes was that he could be trusted to obey orders. The division at this time consisted of three battalions of the 95th (Rifles), the 43rd, 52nd, the 1st and 3rd Caçadores (Portuguese light troops), the 17th Portuguese Regiment and Ross’s famous troop of horse artillery. The Portuguese were excellent. For instance, Cole reported in November, 1813, that for the two previous months the Portuguese brigade of his division had not sent a single man back with sickness, though they had no tents or greatcoats, but only a blanket each.

On the right Hill handled d'Erlon roughly and drove him back. The Light Division on the left centre was told off to attack the hill of La Petite Rhune at dawn, the signal to go being a salvo from Sir John Hope's corps on their left. La Petite Rhune was more of an outpost than the main position, which was on a chain of great mountains behind. The Light Division stood to arms at dawn, and waited for the sound of the guns. The French picquets were seated round their fires, in complete ignorance of what was coming to them. The day broke in splendour, the roar of the signal guns reverberated through the valley, and the division began to clamber up the slope. Nothing could check the grim determination of their advance. They carried their objective by doggedly going on, steadily and coolly, till the enemy was broken. Towards the end of the day Colonel Andrew Barnard of the Rifles was shot in the chest. He fell from his horse on to the hilt of his sword, and badly bruised his side. A young officer ran up to him, and saw blood and air coming from the wound, and blood from his mouth. Barnard calmly asked, "Do you think I am dying? Did you ever see a man so wounded recover?" "Well," replied his junior, "it's a bad wound, of course, but you are not going to die yet." "Thank you," said Barnard. "If any man can recover, I know I shall." He was taken by four men in a blanket to a farmhouse, and was bled copiously and often. Yet he recovered to be an aide-de-camp to the Prince of Wales, and to fight at Waterloo.

From their place on the height of the Little Rhune the Light Division saw 50,000 men run cheering down



the enormous slopes to their right. Colonel Colborne with the 52nd had come up against a palisade of stakes, and had suffered heavy loss. Three times in three different places his assault had failed. Placing a white handkerchief on the point of his sword, he summoned the French officer to surrender, telling him resistance was hopeless, his position was surrounded. The Frenchman yielded, having suffered hardly any loss, but two hundred men of the 52nd lay dead or dying, a regiment, as Napier says, "never surpassed in arms since arms were first borne by men."

Sir John Hope on the left began to cross the river, and by the next day, the 11th, the whole of his corps had passed over. The men had a wet bivouac in fields trampled into mud. Fires were lit with great difficulty in torrents of rain. There was an issue of beef and bread and rum, but it was a night of misery. On the 12th November, Soult fell back on Bayonne, but pursuit was so difficult as to be almost impossible, for the roads were terrible. The infantry sank to their knees in the clinging clayey mud, the cavalry almost to their horses' girths. The artillery could not move at all.

In October the fiery Picton had gone home on leave. He took his seat in the House of Commons, but in reply to a vote of thanks for his services the fire died out of him. His ready flow of language deserted him, and he was so nervous that he nearly broke down. He found his tongue sufficiently to murmur a few words in praise of his officers and soldiers. The Duke of York offered him the command of the Army of Catalonia, but he declined the honour,

as he did not care to command Spanish troops unless they were fighting with the British. He returned to duty with his division on the 26th December, and was greeted with cheers.

In all this confused fighting among mountains and rivers, one after another of Wellington's officers appear like beacon lights, which blaze for an instant, wheel and disappear, as the voyage goes on, and the war draws to its close. Hope, Hill, Picton, Beresford, each had his day in turn and took his part in the final victory, now near at hand, nearer than any of them believed.

The passage of the Nive was forced by pontoons and the fords in battles lasting five days during the second week of December. After the crossing had been effected, Soult made a strong counter-attack on Hope. Sir John was conspicuous throughout the action. Wherever danger threatened, there was his tall figure restoring the battle. Two of his huge horses were shot under him, his uniform was slit into ribands by bullets, four of which went through his hat. Though wounded in the ankle, he refused to leave the field till the French were beaten off. Wellington in his despatch said: "I cannot sufficiently applaud the ability, coolness, and judgment of Lieutenant-General Sir John Hope," but in a private letter, after mentioning his high opinion of Hope's services, Wellington remarked, "We shall lose him if he continues to expose himself to fire as he did on the last three days."

The 13th December was Sir Rowland Hill's day. He held a front from the Adour to the Nive round the

village of St. Pierre. He was cut off from the rest of the army by a sudden rise in the river Nive, which swept away the pontoon bridge on the night of the 12th. The French attacked them bravely, desperately, but Hill, with the Second and a Portuguese division, about 15,000 men, withstood and beat off 35,000 of the enemy. He held on all day, himself everywhere rallying the broken regiments. Through some mistake the 3rd and 71st Regiments received orders to retire. Hill from his height saw them go, leaving the rest of the division "in the air." He dashed off across country to stop them himself. Like a good hunting man he took his fences as he went. Hill seemed inspired, shaken out of his quiet English manner. He actually swore, a thing which his astonished staff had not heard him do since Talavera. True, it was a very mild oath. Seeing that things were not going too well, he put in his reserves, himself leading them, with the words, "Damn it, this won't do!"

Wellington reached him with reinforcements when the battle was won. As the Commander-in-Chief cantered up he called out, "Hill, the day is your own!" and shook him warmly by the hand. Hill had showed marked ability. Not only was this calm English squire a born soldier, but his thoughtfulness and care for his men won him their affection as well as their confidence. As an instance, a sergeant who carried a letter to Hill about this time was agreeably surprised to find the General's servant giving him supper and a billet for the night, and was still more gratified when in the morning his haversack was filled with food, and he was presented with a dollar.





By the 18th December, all was quiet on the front. The troops settled down with great satisfaction into winter quarters, for a few weeks rest in comparative comfort. They still thought of the war as lasting well-nigh for ever. They did not know that a very few months would bring the peace. The comfort they enjoyed was only comparative, for bivouacs were rough, and tents were cramped and no real shelter against heavy and continuous rain. The winter of 1813-14 was very severe, storms of wind and rain alternating with a very hard frost, turning ponds to ice. Whenever the weather permitted, Wellington took the field with his foxhounds. It is said that he threw off his cold official manner, and behaved like a light-hearted country gentleman.

Wellington, based on St. Jean de Luz, received reinforcement and money. He was thus enabled to send back to their own country most of the Spaniards, who in revenge for what they had suffered, could not be restrained from plundering the French civilians. Both armies were completely immobilised by mud, and it was not until February, 1814, that the allies were able to move again. In a fortnight Wellington forced river after river, won a great battle, compelled Soult to abandon Bayonne, and cut him off from Bordeaux. Wellington's also was the plan that caused the bridge to be flung across the Adour.

Soult's position lay roughly along the Adour, with his right resting on the fortress of Bayonne. It was a great river, with a strong current and well protected by troops and gunboats at Bayonne. Wellington's design was to cut off Soult's army from the

fortress. Hill, with the Light, the Second and a Portuguese division, Sir Henry Clinton in command of the Sixth, and Picton with the Third, compelled Soult to withdraw and take up a position on the heights of Orthez.

At the same time, while Wellington was keeping Soult busy, Sir John Hope had the difficult task of crossing the Adour between Bayonne and the sea. He had 28,000 men, British and Portuguese, including the First and Fifth Divisions, and twenty guns. A flotilla of gunboats was to have appeared in the river in support, but the wind was contrary and they were not there. Hope was firm, unshakable. He would not wait. His artillery fired rockets, whizzing, leaping, hissing and twisting, at the French gunboats. Some were set on fire, and the rest retired in panic and confusion out of range. Major-General Stopford and 600 men of the Guards were ferried across unseen in boats and rafts, and lay hidden among the sandhills. Their job was to cover the building of the bridge. At last the Navy came sailing up. The current was too swift for pontoons, and large vessels would most certainly have been wrecked on the sandbanks, so twenty-six craft of about fifty to sixty tons sailed in and anchored head to stern. A gale had arisen, and at the bar was a rough tumbling sea. Four or five of the little ships were lost with all hands, but the officers and men of the Royal Navy behaved with the greatest determination, skill and daring, loyally helped by the troops. A boom was placed in position to guard against fireships. On the 26th February, Hope's corps crossed and encircled Bayonne to the

north, both his flanks resting on the river. Bayonne remained invested and contained while Wellington swept Soult from Orthez and fought and won the battle of Toulouse.

Sailors and soldiers had worked like slaves, though very short of food, to complete the bridge, the construction of which was a very great feat indeed. The rations issued during the operation were slices of beef, hastily half-roasted, mouldy biscuit that had been too long on shipboard, and indifferent tea. At the end of March the investing troops began to suffer from heat and sun. Sir John withdrew the British divisions, except for picquets, a mile or more back, and organised games for the men, setting them to run races and jump for prizes. They were encamped in a little valley by a lake, in the shelter of pine trees. The conduct of the allied troops was excellent. They had few temptations in that paradise.

At midnight on the 11th April, a messenger arrived at Hope's headquarters to say that the allies were entering Paris, and that Napoleon had abdicated. The news was received with utter amazement, it seemed incredible. The Governor of Bayonne was informed and refused to believe it. Discipline therefore was not relaxed, though further hostilities were not expected. A desperate night sortie by the garrison was in consequence a surprise. Three thousand men poured out of the citadel, swamped the picquets, and rushed the village of St. Etienne. A counter-attack was successful at the bayonet's point, but the sortie cost the allies 800 casualties. At the first sound of firing, Hope and his staff galloped hard for St. Etienne



along a sunken road, towards a pandemonium of noise and flashing blazing light. They rode right into the French who were astride of the track. Eight bullets struck Hope's great horse, which fell, pinning him to the ground by the leg. He was hit in the arm, and two of his aides, Captain Herries and Mr. Moore, a nephew of Sir John Moore, were severely wounded in trying to rescue him. All three were taken prisoners. The French dragged the big man out of his boot to free him from his horse. The officers were quickly released, for an armistice had, in fact, been declared before the action.

The trout began to stir in the Adour, and fishing rods came out of many an officer's valise. A race-course was marked out, and there were balls held in the villages, at which the regimental bands performed, and to which the local Frenchwomen were invited. They came, but the French officers were sulky and sullen.

Meanwhile on the other front the battle of Orthez had been fought on the 27th February, 1814. The night before the battle an army corps lay in bivouac. Three battalions of infantry lay around a hundred fires, their arms piled, the firelight glancing on the barrels. To the rear were two regiments of cavalry, their horses picketed in long lines. Across the road glowed the fires of two whole divisions, darkened when men passed in front of them, and flaring up when fed with fuel. The road itself was filled with guns and their limbers, waiting with the other arms for battle at dawn.

Hill's corps on the right threatened the town of

Orthez. His orders were to march to the flank and menace Soult's line of retreat. The movement was carried out with precision, and in the end was decisive. But the French position was very strong, and the main attack, of the centre and the left, was held up. Soult is said to have slapped his thigh and shouted exultantly, "*Enfin je le tiens!*" and to have ordered up his reserves. Now came one of Wellington's lightning decisions. He thrust between two French corps the trusty 52nd, still under the command of that brave and skilful regimental officer, Colonel Colborne. Their colonel led them over marshy ground, the men sinking to the knee, but pressing sternly forward, till, forming up clear of the marsh, they dashed with a shout upon the enemy. Into the gap thus made Wellington pushed the left corps, while the centre attacked again. Victory was assured, and Soult fell sullenly back. He left Bordeaux open, and retreated on Toulouse.

The Garonne was in flood, and nothing could be done until early in April. Napoleon's abdication was signed on the 6th, but no news of this event reached the combatants for several days. The battle of Toulouse was fought on Easter Sunday the 10th, in complete ignorance of the change in the situation. At two o'clock in the morning, with the moon gleaming on their rifle barrels, Alten's Light Division passed the Garonne, and at 6 a.m. the whole army moved forward. The Light Division with Picton's Third were to attack the Languedoc Canal. Picton's part was to make a feint attack on the lines defending the bridge of Jumeaux, but not to press it home. However, the

Spaniards on his left ran away so fast and far that Wellington said he doubted if the Pyrenees would stop them. Picton seeing this tried to rush the lines. He was repulsed with heavy loss. Wellington is said not to have trusted his officers enough, but his experiences with Beresford, Craufurd, and Picton were unfortunate.

The Spaniards were both unskilful and unfortunate. They attacked too soon, before the British supporting troops were ready. They came on bravely enough, but they were met with a crushing fire which broke them, and they ran. Wellington remarked, "Well, damn me if I ever saw ten thousand men run a race before!" Beresford was lucky this time. He carried out his orders with skill and resolution, and his soldiers nobly backed him. With the Fourth and Sixth Divisions he had to make a flank march of two miles under fire from the trenches in the hills, along a road that was little better than a strip of marsh. It was quite impossible for artillery, which had to be left behind. The men splashed steadily on their way, the enemy's fire on their right, the fordless river on their left. When they reached the end of the ridge on which the enemy was posted, the battalions brought their left shoulders up, and prepared to storm the hill. The French left their trenches and surged down the slopes to overwhelm Beresford's thin red line. Nothing could stop the Scottish regiments. Smashing volleys blew away the heads of Soult's columns, the bayonet did the rest. Those two old Highland comrades in arms, the 42nd and the 79th, leapt over the trenches like a pack of hounds crying. Beresford's action was the

turning point of the battle, for nowhere else had the allies reached their objectives. Even Hill, who had marched against the west front of the city, had been checked by a swamp and withdrawn. Toulouse was occupied on the 12th April, and this was the end of the war.

Mingled with relief and the joyful anticipation of a victorious homecoming in the mind of many an officer was the rueful prospect of half-pay. "Othello's occupation's gone." The army was a professional one. Many who had served long and honourably were left to neglect and poverty on the half-pay of a junior officer. Peerages rewarded the more important figures. Lord Wellington was created Duke, Hill found himself a peer on his return home. Graham was translated into Lord Lynedoch, Sir John Hope into the Earl of Hopetoun, Beresford also went to the House of Lords, and, somewhat surprisingly, Sir Stapleton Cotton became Lord Combermere. In days when the word Democracy aroused as much fear and dislike as Bolshevism in later times, a lord really was a lord, and a peerage carried with it great weight and prestige. No doubt that was the reason of Picton's discontent that his claims had been passed over. As he expressed it, "if the coronet was lying at the crown of a breach, I should have as good a chance as any of them." Though only a divisional commander, he was perhaps the best known of all the Duke's Peninsular generals, and many people wondered why his services lacked full recognition. He was as well known for his eccentricity as for his

generalship, for example, his addiction to untidy civilian dress on service. His staff copied him in slovenliness. Picton and his circle were known to the Army as "the Bear and Ragged Staff," an allusion to the arms of the Earl of Warwick. Picton had to be content with another vote of thanks from the House of Commons, and a G.C.B.

A pleasing instance of the care and trouble Picton took of his officers is related by Robinson in his *Life*. One of his division, Lieutenant Macpherson, was still a lieutenant at the end of the war in 1814, in spite of his distinguished services. He had no influence or money. In Bordeaux after peace had been signed, Picton met him and invited him to dinner. Though suffering from a wound received at Orthez, he accepted. Macpherson was obviously so ill that Picton would not let him leave the house, but sent for his baggage and made him stay till he left for England.

Some months later Macpherson was walking along Pall Mall, when he saw Sir Thomas Picton approaching with several other officers. Picton apparently had not seen him. He was conversing with his friends, and Macpherson was passing, as he thought, unnoticed. But Picton seized his arm and shouted at him, "Damme, sir, are you going to cut me?" "No, sir," replied the somewhat startled officer, "but I thought you might have forgotten me." "Forgotten you! No, I've not forgotten you. But come along, sir, come home with me, I have got something I want you to copy." Macpherson walked with the General to his room in the Grosvenor Coffee House, and after a while Picton put into his hands an exact memorandum of Macpherson's services,

saying, "Copy that, and we'll send it in to Whitehall." A few days later Macpherson was summoned by Sir Thomas. He found the General in a furious rage. "There, sir, read that!" Macpherson spread out the crumpled page, and saw the familiar printed form, "No vacancy." "Come along to the Horse Guards at once," roared the General. "I'll see the Duke of York himself, by gad!" He did, and within a week Macpherson was gazetted captain.

There was another war, a small one, with the United States of America, which afforded occupation for a few ardent spirits. It had dragged on with varying success for three years, and ought never to have been begun. Canning had obstinately refused to open trade negotiations with the States, and Napoleon, of course, had done his best to foment trouble. The two countries gradually drifted into war. The Americans failed in their attack on Canada but were successful at sea. The British frigates were constantly being taken in duels like the last famous one between the *Shannon* and the *Chesapeake*, a solitary British victory. As soon as the Napoleonic wars had come to a triumphant ending, the British Government, instead of making overtures for peace with the States, made up its mind in optimistic mood to win. An expedition including some famous Peninsular regiments was sent to American shores with instructions to act with the Royal Navy and finish up the war. Major-General Robert Ross was in command. He was one of Lowry Cole's men, had led the 20th Regiment at Maida, and had done notable service with the Fourth Division in Spain. A brave soldier, he

found high responsibility rather too much for his cautious spirit. His force, a weak division, landed near Washington after sailing up the Potomac, and in August, 1814, won the battle of Bladensburg, in an expensive frontal assault. Ross then marched on Washington and burnt it. Many of his officers thought the act a barbarous one, but Ross seems to have been acting under instructions.

Harry Smith, who had gone straight from France to America to join Ross's staff, was sent home with despatches. He had not been home for seven years, since boyhood, in fact. "Wife, home and country!" he exclaimed, and the *Iphigenia*, as if feeling his impatience, only took twenty-one days from Chesapeake to Spithead.

As Smith drove up to London, the peaceful countryside, such a contrast to what he had experienced during seven years of war, made him breathless with delight. London was full, and he secured rooms with difficulty at the Salopian Coffee House in Parliament Street. There he met a brother Rifleman, who told him where his wife was, and that she was well. Smith, in his relief and joy, burst, so he says, into "floods of tears." Tears seemed to be nearer the surface in Englishmen of those days. They were certainly more sentimental. There was no telegraph to warn his wife. Smith was his own announcer. "*O Dios, la mano de mi Enrique!*" she cried, and ran into his arms. At this time Juana was a lovely creature, with brilliant dark eyes, clear olive skin, dark brown hair, a perfect figure and a silvery voice. She was gentle, intelligent, *alive*.

Smith had an interview with the Prince Regent, and was much impressed by his affability. While he was telling the story of Bladensburg, Ross was killed in action in that far-off foreign field. Before Smith left he had tried to dissuade Ross from attempting an attack on Baltimore. Attack it however Ross did, and disaster overtook him.

Smith was not to be long at home. Swift upon the news of defeat, he was ordered to join the staff of Sir Edward Pakenham, the new commander, the hero of Salamanca. Smith was very fond of his chief, and proud to serve under him, but the enterprise had the same melancholy ending. Pakenham tried to take New Orleans by frontal assault on New Year's Day, 1815, only to be beaten back by a murderous fire, and to be himself killed. A few days before this reverse, which was a shock to the old Peninsular officers, accustomed to victory, peace had been signed at Ghent, and the inglorious and unnecessary war was over. At Mobile Bay, where lay the British forces, awaiting transports for home, there was a shortage of biscuit. Plenty of flour was available, but no means of baking bread. Smith had what he called an "inspiration." An inner voice told him to burn the oyster shells lying about everywhere for lime, use the sea sand, and with the help of barrel hoops for arches, to construct ovens. This was done, and bread baked, to the great satisfaction of the troops. Smith was constantly getting "visions" and "inspirations." Without quite realising it, he was apparently clairvoyant.

Britain was at peace at last on all fronts, and disarmament began.



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# XI

1815

SPRING WAS STIRRING over the war-wasted fields of Europe when the Congress of Vienna heard with stupefaction that the Eagle had escaped from his caged prison. Napoleon Bonaparte had landed in France. The Congress broke up in haste, and the armies were once more mobilised and set to marching westwards over the great plains. Britain was busy also. The battalions, squadrons, troops and batteries were quickly brought up to strength, new divisions were formed, and as a matter of course the Duke of Wellington was appointed to command the allied army in Belgium. It was not a command that would be chosen by a general matched with an enemy like Napoleon. The Emperor was to lead a great army of veteran troops all of one nation, inspired by patriotism and a fanatical personal loyalty. The prisoners had all come back, from the Russian snows, the Spanish gaols, the English hulks, filled with revenge and hate that spread from them throughout that mighty host. Wellington's force consisted of British, Hanoverians, King's German Legion, Brunswickers, and Dutch-Belgian troops. He could rely on the steadiness of his British infantry officers and men, and his artillery was fairly good. His cavalry was ardent and well-led, but impetuous and lacking in long experience of war.

The army was not like that of the Peninsula, hammered and forged into a sword of steel. The foreigners varied in quality. Many of the German contingents were excellent, though some were entering upon their first campaign under untried officers, and were not quite trustworthy. The Dutch-Belgians were raw levies, hastily raised, and were of little use.

On his side Napoleon worked with incredible speed and astonishing ability in organising and arming. Never had his genius been more sure. His star was not yet set. In three months he concentrated 92,000 infantry, 22,000 cavalry and 350 guns on the Belgian frontier. He did not dare to wage a defensive war against ever-increasing odds. Wellington's army and the Prussians in Belgium menaced Paris. If he could separate and defeat them one by one he could occupy the Rhine frontiers, and so be on the flank of the marching myriads of Russia and Austria.

It is by no means intended to give a detailed account of the strategy and tactics of the Waterloo campaign, but rather to emphasise the parts played by Wellington's old comrades in arms. If it seems that the action of the Prussians under Blücher is neglected, it will be sufficient to quote the Duke of Wellington's despatch:

"I should not do justice to my feelings, or to Marshal Blücher and the Prussian Army, if I did not attribute the successful result of this arduous day to the cordial and timely assistance I received from them."

Wellington's army steadily grew. By June he had nearly 90,000 men all told. The Prince of Orange commanded the First Corps, which consisted of two

British divisions, including the Guards Division under General Cooke, and a large foreign contingent. That steadfast Englishman, Lord Hill, had the Second Corps, comprising the Second and Fourth Divisions under Clinton and Colville, and a Dutch-Belgian division. The Earl of Uxbridge, last heard of as Lord Paget with Sir John Moore, commanded the Cavalry Corps, 10,000 sabres of mixed nationalities. Finally Wellington held in hand a reserve in Brussels formed out of Picton's Fifth Division, and Germans, Dutch and Belgians.

In Brussels on the night of the 15th June was held the famous ball of the Duchess of Richmond. There were present the Prince of Orange, Wellington, his staff and generals, the Earl of Uxbridge, Lord Saltoun the Guardsman, Lord Fitzroy Somerset, Sir Henry Clinton, Sir Thomas Picton, Ponsonby, Pack, Byng, Kempt, and many younger officers, diplomats, peers, émigrés. Wellington arrived about midnight, and stood looking at the lovely and moving scene. Well he knew it was a Dance of Death. Towards one o'clock a messenger came to the door for the Prince of Orange. The French were at Quatre Bras. The news flew round the lighted hall, and the gay uniforms melted away. Outside, the sleeping city was dark and quiet. Suddenly a trumpet call rang out, then another, and another. The drums began to roll. Officers and soldiers were billeted in every house, and they streamed in from all parts to the Place Royale. Baggage horses and wagons were being loaded, artillery and supply columns were harnessing with jingle and shouting, mounted staff officers were picking their way through

the crowds, hoofs and wheels were clattering over the pavé, and high over all the din the trumpets and the bugles and the pipes were calling, and the drums beating to arms.

General Constant, chief of staff to the Prince of Orange, sent the message that broke up the ball. On his own initiative Prince Bernard of Saxe-Weimar, with four battalions of Nassau infantry, took post at Quatre Bras, and for hours bluffed Ney and his forty thousand men into thinking that the main army was there. The staff of the Prince of Orange moved up a brigade of Dutch-Belgians to Bernard's support. Wellington had been surprised to see the Prince of Orange at the ball. He had left Lord Hill and the Prince at the front to obtain news and keep him informed. The Prince told the Duke that the French had crossed the Sambre. The Duke sent him back to his post. He proved to be a brave but unskilful commander. Wellington went to his own quarters, and found there an officer just come from Blücher with the news. He stated afterwards that Blücher had sent him the fattest man in the Prussian army, who had taken thirty hours to travel thirty miles.

Wellington at once ordered Picton to take his division to Quatre Bras as fast as he could, and rode off in the dawning day to see Blücher at Ligny. Picton had two brigades of first-rate British troops, one under Sir Denis Pack, consisting of the 1st Foot (Royal Scots), the 42nd (the Black Watch), the 44th, and 92nd (Gordon Highlanders). Sir James Kempt had the other, with the 28th, 32nd, 79th (Cameron Highlanders) and the 95th (Rifle Brigade). There was also a brigade

of Hanoverians, good troops. The division marched out of Brussels, the men singing to the steady tramp-tramp-tramp of their feet. They sang the rollicking topical choruses of the type of "Boney was a Warrior, O-I-O," as well as the simple nostalgic songs of home, "The Bluebells of Scotland," "Dashing Away with the Smoothing Iron," "The Girl I left behind Me." How many thousands of girls left behind were waiting fearfully in cottage and mansion, for news!

Picton had been summoned by the War Department to join the army in Flanders under the Duke of Wellington. Curious though it may seem to soldiers of to-day, Picton appeared to have had the power to make conditions. On an assurance from the Duke that he would be serving directly under the Commander-in-Chief and not under any other general officer, Picton joined up. Like many another Celt he was "fey." He had a presentiment of his death. He left London on the 11th June. He was entertained on his way to Dover at the Fountain Inn, Canterbury, by the burgesses of that city. After the battle on the 18th his dead body rested at the Fountain once more.

Dressed in a shabby, drab greatcoat and a rusty old top-hat, Picton, who did not care one of his curses for appearances so long as he was comfortable, led his men along the muddy roads and through the midday heat to Quatre Bras. He reached that spot at about three o'clock in the afternoon. Wellington had ridden hard back from Ligny and had been there since ten. Les Quatre Bras was only a collection of three or four houses, the junction of four cross roads,

but its name will not be forgotten while the British Army lives.

Picton's men went straight into action. Pack's and Kempt's brigades, kneeling hidden in the tall green corn, suddenly stood, and with point-blank fire blew away the head of a French column. Old Picton was seen galloping from one regiment to another, and the cheering troops pushed their attack home with the bayonet. The 79th were on one wing and their old comrades the 42nd were on the other. To meet the counter-attack of the French reserves the regiments retired to their original positions. The Brunswick Hussars of Picton's division were supposed to cover this withdrawal, but were swept back themselves by the French lancers. The British, still in line, formed square, but the 44th were caught in line. In front and rear they were assailed. Colonel Hamerton faced the rear rank about, and with the utmost coolness the regiment smote the hurrying lancers with their fire. The troops in square were battered by artillery, smothered by cavalry, but when the smoke of their volleys curled away, they were standing fast. Picton happened to be in the square of the 28th. Perceiving that the storming mass of cavalry was sweeping in on three sides at once, he shouted, "28th! Remember Egypt!"<sup>1</sup> The men gave a cheer, and reserving their fire till the rushing waves were almost upon them, tumbled the horsemen into ruin and confusion. Every regiment did well that day. Alten's mixed division came up and reinforced, and the Guards also,

<sup>1</sup> A reference to the battle of 21st March, 1801, when the 28th defeated a French cavalry charge, back to back.



while the left of the position was secured by Colonel Sir Andrew Barnard, with the 1/95th.

Then came Kellermann's great cavalry charge, one brigade of French cuirassiers against an army. Trumpets sounded, the sun flashing on the breastplates and arms, as the French cavalry thundered down upon the waiting British, immovable, calm and terrible. They kept their fire till the last, and smote the leading ranks with their blast. But this time the French horsemen would not be stayed. They smashed through the lines and squares, captured a regimental standard, sabred a battery's gunners, and found themselves in Quatre Bras, in the heart of Wellington's army. Shot at from all sides, they stampeded back to their lines.

It was a drawn battle. Both sides occupied their own ground, but it was a great day for the British, Hanoverian and Brunswick infantry. Meanwhile Napoleon had beaten the Prussians at Ligny, had sent Grouchy to pursue and hold them off, and then turned in strength upon Wellington and marched for Quatre Bras. The allied army bivouacked on the field. Picton passed a night of pain. Two ribs had been broken by a bullet. He told no one but his servant, who bound him up, and he carried on. Wellington spent the night of the 16th of June with his army, wrapt in his cloak. Reinforcements were arriving, the Earl of Uxbridge with the cavalry corps, the infantry divisions of Clinton and Colville, and the artillery reserve. But Wellington decided, on hearing of Blücher's defeat and fearing for his flank, to begin a retreat at ten o'clock to Mont Saint Jean by Waterloo. As he

remarked, "Old Blücher has had a damned good licking and has gone back to Wavre, eighteen miles. As he has gone back, we must go too."

Lord Hill was ordered to send back the marching divisions. The initial stages of the retreat were well masked by the light companies of the Guards and by Barnard with his riflemen. The divisions of Cooke, Alten and Picton, and the Dutch-Belgians marched up the Brussels road. The movements was covered by the Earl of Uxbridge and his cavalry corps. A dark, handsome, dashing hussar, he was the best cavalry leader in the British Army, and Wellington appreciated his soldierly qualities. He was really too dashing and impetuous to be considered a leader of genius. However, in Spain as Lord Paget he had handled Moore's five cavalry regiments with valour and skill. In 1809 he was with the unlucky Walcheren expedition, while from 1806 to 1812 he was Member of Parliament for Milborne Port, a village in Dorset. He ran away with the wife of Wellington's brother Henry, and fought a duel with the aggrieved husband. He did not serve with Wellington in Spain.

There was plenty of excitement in this retreat. Captain Mercer, with his troop of Horse Artillery, found himself without orders and alone with the whole French army advancing on his front. Sir Ormsby Vandeleur with a brigade of light dragoons was two or three hundred yards to his rear. Mercer decided to retire and take up a position immediately in front of Vandeleur, intending after giving a round or two to the French, to retire through Vandeleur's intervals, and leave the ground free for his charge.

He took up his post, but the guns were scarcely unlimbered when Sir Ormsby came furiously up, exclaiming, "What are you doing here, sir? You encumber my front, and we shall not be able to charge. Take your guns away, sir; instantly, I say—take them away!" Mercer vainly tried to explain that his fire would allow the charge to be made more effectively. "No, no; take them out of my way, sir."

Up came Lord Uxbridge, and matters changed in a moment.

"Captain Mercer, are you loaded?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Then give them a round as they rise the hill, and get back as quickly as possible. Light dragoons, threes right, at a trot, march!"

He then gave some orders to Sir Ormsby, whom Mercer saw no more. "They are just coming up the hill," said Lord Uxbridge. "Let them get well up before you fire. Do you think you can retire quick enough afterwards?"

"I am sure of it, my lord."

"Very well, then. Keep a good look-out and point your guns well."

Huge masses of dark thunder cloud hung over the British rearguard, and not a leaf was stirring. The hill from which the French army had descended was by contrast lit with brilliant sunshine. A single horseman, followed by several others, appeared on the ridge, and black against the sunlit slope stood the unmistakable silhouette of Napoleon himself. Uxbridge roared "Fire, fire!" Mercer gave them a round from each gun, and the gunners limbered up,

and dashed back for their lives, pursued by the French cavalry. As he went there was a terrific clap of thunder, dazzling lightning, and rain in sheets. Mercer sought refuge among the allied hussars in the village. The rain had put out every slow match, but the downpour was so heavy that one could not see more than a few yards ahead, a fact which aided Mercer to get away. So close were the pursuing French to the retreating British that above the roar of the storm and lashing rain the latter could hear the jeers and laughter of their foes. The British passed through Genappe. The French pressed on. As their horse streamed up the hill, Uxbridge sent the Life Guards at them. The big men and big horses smashed through the French cavalry in an instant. Hereafter mud slowed down the retreat and pursuit. Uxbridge extricated the rearguard with considerable skill, after its task of covering the general retreat was done, and at the end of it the cavalry had confidence in themselves and their chief. The night drew on.

The men were tired out, wet through, their boots clogged with mud. It was a miserable bivouac, but though the fires gave out more smoke than flame, officers and men slept fitfully through the rain. Their bodies were wet, their blankets and greatcoats were wet, the ground was wet. Two gunner officers managed to get a fire going. "My companion had an umbrella (which by the way had afforded some merriment to our people on the march). This we planted against the sloping bank of the hedge, and seating ourselves under it, he on one side of the stick, I on the other, we lighted cigars and became *comfortable!*

With the break of day the clouds rose higher. At six o'clock on the morning of the 18th June, the bugles, pipes and drums were playing, but long ere this the shivering troops were awake and cleaning their arms from mud and rust.

That morning the Duke heard from Blücher, and decided to stay and fight. His army was on the low ridge of Mont Saint Jean, and his enemy on a parallel ridge, La Belle Alliance, three-quarters of a mile away. The battle lines extended for a little over two miles, and in that narrow area were concentrated 140,000 souls. Below lay the chateau, out-buildings, walls and hedges of Hougoumont, held throughout the day by the Guards, then as now, famous soldiers. There lay also the farm of La Haye Sainte, garrisoned by Major Baring and men of the King's German Legion. Wellington's tactics were his usual ones when taking up a defensive position. He kept his reserves behind the crest of the ridge, thus saving casualties and puzzling his adversaries. There were very few troops to be seen. In fact the whole of the infantry except a line of skirmishers was placed in dead ground on the brow of the ridge. Contrary to modern practice, the guns were mostly posted in front of the infantry.

Napoleon held his last review. His devoted army was like a kaleidoscope of shifting colour, blue, white and green, purple, yellow and red. The bayonets flashed and the cuirasses of steel and brass winked and glimmered in the sun. Amid the pealing trumpets and the roll of drums, amid wild cheering and frenzied shouts of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" Napoleon spread out his army on the slopes "like a mighty glittering fan, in

front of the coolly watching British." His plan was to pierce the centre of his foe. He forgot, or had not learnt, that the British infantryman, by virtue of his steadiness and the accuracy of his musketry fire, was unconquerable. The infantryman was the true forerunner of those who fought and died at Mons and Le Cateau, and many another bloody field since.

Waterloo appeared to the fighting infantry as a mist of choking smoke, in which hundreds of guns flashed and bellowed. The rushing projectiles smashed in among them, then ceased, and through the smoke came shouting the massed battalions, or a thundering whirlwind of horse, to be coolly shot down by Brown Bess. "After the action," says Kincaid, "I met a very little fellow, and asked him what had happened to him yesterday. 'I'll be hanged,' said he, 'if I know anything at all about the matter, for I was all day trodden in the mud and galloped over by every scoundrel who had a horse; and, in short, I only owe my existence to my insignificance.'" When the first cannon shot was fired, the British officers looked at their watches. It was 11.35.

A furious attack on Hougoumont was repulsed after some bitter fighting, but this was merely a feint. And close on one o'clock, one of Napoleon's staff observed through a telescope a dark mass of troops in the far distance. Was it Grouchy? No, they were Prussians! Napoleon must win soon or lose all. However, he thought he had time enough. There followed an artillery duel, nothing compared to the storm of iron flung about in these days, but sufficiently terrifying then to those close-packed

troops when one cannon-ball tore a lane through a column.

D'Erlon's columns were attacking in mass, 16,000 men, with 74 guns sweeping a way before them. Napoleon is said to have asked on this morning, "*Où est la division de Picton?*" He was answered. Picton's splendid division was lining the road to Wavre behind a scanty, straggling, broken hedge, and it was withdrawn behind the skyline when the batteries opened upon it. The men lay down. As the French topped the gentle rise, crying *En avant! En avant!* their drums beating the *pas de charge*, that robust, stern-faced, six-foot soldier, Picton, gave the order "Stand!" Kempt's brigade leapt to their feet, and fired in a thin two-deep line at forty paces distance. Kempt's and Pack's brigades together only totalled three thousand men. The unwieldy mass of French infantry was caught in the act of deploying, and wavered. Picton shouted "Charge!" and fell dead with a bullet through his temple. Kempt and his men advanced with their bayonets gleaming through the smoke, and D'Erlon's columns crumbled away. In the days when the colours went into battle men were willing and eager to die in their defence or attack. During this hand-to-hand struggle a French officer seized the colours of the 32nd. The ensign wrestled with him, while the covering colour-sergeant ran him through with his halberd.

Sir Denis Pack's Scottish brigade was compelled to retire from the line of hedge they had been holding, and Sir Denis galloped up to the Gordons, barely two hundred strong. "Highlanders!" he cried. "You must

charge! On them with the bayonet." "92nd! Shoulder to shoulder!" shouted Major Campbell, "Remember Egypt! Forward, at the double!" Mysteriously the massed columns melted at their approach, and "Here come the cavalry!" some one shouted. "Hoi, hurrah!" yelled the Highlanders, "The Greys, the Scots Greys." The big men on those beautiful grey horses came thundering on, the long swords flashing over the tall bearskins.

"Scotland for ever!"

"Scotland for ever!" echoed the exultant Highlanders, as they waved their feather bonnets proudly, triumphantly, and let the horsemen through.

Sir William Ponsonby led the Union Brigade in the famous charge, the Scots Greys, the English 1st Royal Dragoons, and the Irish Inniskilling Dragoons. Ponsonby was killed after the brigade had reached the guns. He was unhorsed by a French lancer subaltern, and had surrendered. Some of the Greys came up to the rescue, and the Frenchman, fearing to lose his prisoner, ran him through with a lance. The ruin of D'Erlon's corps was complete. Not a single Frenchman was left upon the slopes of Mont Saint Jean. Blown, scattered, disorganised, the British were seen retiring in sadly dwindled groups, pursued by the French lancers. The reserves had been drawn into the main attack, for meanwhile Lord Uxbridge, gallant, impetuous, imprudent, had ridden with Lord Edward Somerset's Household Brigade of Life Guards and Blues straight at the French cuirassiers, whom they dispersed. Somerset afterwards remarked, "They hammered on the cuirasses like coppersmiths



at work," a rather prosaic description of a very valiant feat of arms. Somerset himself lost his cocked hat, and charged bare-headed. On his return, while looking for his hat, a cannon ball took off the flap of his coat and killed his horse. Long afterwards, Uxbridge wrote: "I committed a great mistake in having myself led the attack. The *carrière* once begun, the leader is no better than any other man; whereas, if I had placed myself at the head of the second line, there is no saying what great advantages might have accrued from it."

The slopes were littered thickly with the awful débris of a battlefield, equipment, weapons, bloody rags, men and horses. The mangled horses were a pitiful sight. Man's inhumanity to man still persists, but in future wars he will perhaps not devote that most beautiful creature the horse to mutilation and death. As so often happens in war and life, comedy breaks in among the tragedy. A medical officer, a hastily transformed civilian, ignorant of war, strolled up to a troop of horse guns in a shower of rain carrying an umbrella. Suddenly some heavy shot came hopping along, and one passed close to the startled medico. He dropped on his knees and one hand, the other still keeping his umbrella at the hoist, and scrambled off like a great baboon, amid shouts of laughter from the gunners.

Hougoumont had been fiercely attacked, reinforced, and set on fire by incendiary shells. It was half-past three in the afternoon, and still Blücher had not appeared. Could the Allied Army hang on? Ney attacked La Haye Sainte again, but his infantry was

repulsed by the shells and bullets of the King's German Legion. Then he led in person a mighty charge of 10,000 horsemen against the Allied foot, who formed squares to meet it. It was prefaced by such a cannonade as had never before been known in war, flashes all along the heights, and rolling clouds of smoke. Ney advanced in three lines, cuirassiers in shining steel, Red lancers of the Guard, and chasseurs of the Guard in green and gold, and black bearskins. The whole front appeared as a glittering mass, and came forward like some great wave, deliberately, at a steady trot. The Allied batteries remained in front of the infantry just at the top of the rise. The gunners waited till the cavalry was forty yards away, let fly with grape-shot, and abandoning their guns to the surging tide, ran back to the shelter of the squares. The British and German infantry took root in the ground, the sun like summer lightning on their bayonets. Their generals were beside them, not as to-day obliged to be far in the rear. They seemed overwhelmed, but when the cloud of their volley had drifted away, there they were, with the furious wave of horsemen breaking in vain against the wall.

Uxbridge sent the Anglo-Allied cavalry to relieve the hard-pressed squares. Instantly the British and German artillerymen rushed back to their guns, and stood by, with the port-fires glowing and spluttering. That heroic soul Norman Ramsay, of the galloping guns, was killed here, to the great grief of his brother gunners. Bravely the French came on again and again. The quickly thinning Allied squares were surrounded, and all but broken, swallowed up as by a tossing

sea, with a spray of gleaming swords. The men, gasping in the choking smoke, their faces blackened with powder, stood or knelt steadfast still, the officers standing with drawn swords. And always, as the square thinned, was repeated the inexorable order, CLOSE UP. Was all lost? Not yet. The close-packed French squadrons, weary men on weary horses, shot up by artillery and musketry, were sinking in the mud, their dead heaped high around the squares.

At 4.30, old Blücher, "Marschall Vorwärts," attacked the French flank with what troops he had, but the British were still anxious. The Emperor's cavalry withdrew, and his infantry came on again, only to be shot to pieces. About this time of the afternoon Wellington rode up to Sir Colin Halkett's brigade, and inquired how they were. "Two thirds are down, my lord, and the remainder so exhausted that a rest, even a short one, is really necessary. Could not one of the foreign corps, not yet engaged, relieve us?" Wellington replied, "The result of the battle depends on the unflinching front of the British troops. A change would be most dangerous." "Enough, my lord," said Halkett, "we stand here till the last man falls."

Major Baring, with his German legionaries, were turned out of La Haye Sainte, after a heroic resistance in which they had used up all their ammunition. Everywhere there was but little food left for Brown Bess. Most of the Duke's staff had been killed or wounded. Only a fragment remained of the cavalry of Somerset and Ponsonby. The Dutch, Belgians and some Hanoverian cavalry were wavering or retiring.

The situation looked critical. Napoleon was also in peril, but by a shattering blow from his Old Guard he freed his right flank for the time from the Prussians. It was now seven o'clock, and Napoleon had two hours of daylight to win Waterloo.

Wellington reinforced his centre. Lord Hill was ordered to bring forward troops from the reserve. He had been covering the right wing of the line, and had been severely bruised by his horse being shot and rolling upon him. The Anglo-Germans, including Sir F. Adam's light brigade, reoccupied the edge of the ridge. The Prussians began to press again. It was time for Napoleon to play his last gamble with Fate.

The Imperial Guard advanced against the rise between Hougoumont and La Haye Sainte. Behind the crest was a brigade of Guards, under Major-General Maitland, lying in the corn, and sheltering from the artillery fire. As the French topped the rise, Wellington ordered the Guards to stand. "Now, Maitland, now's your time!" They poured in a volley, and charged with the bayonet, and broke the Imperial Guard. A second column was thrown back by a charge to their flank of Colonel Sir John Colborne's 52nd Regiment, supported by the rest of Adam's brigade. It was Bonaparte's last card, trumped.

A cry of despair went up. "The Guard gives way! *Sauve qui peut! Nous sommes trahis!*" For the Allies the great moment had come. In the light of the setting sun there sat a horseman alone. He waved his hat. With a roar of cheering from thousands of parched throats the whole line advanced. Stiff, weary, covered with mud and the blood of their comrades, smoke-

blackened, exultant, the troops staggered onward in a sort of lurching trot, stumbling over the dead and dying as the Colours went forward. The trumpets sounded and the drums beat. Forty thousand men came down the slopes like a torrent. The enemy broke in panic and ruin before their triumphant onset. For two miles, till dark, they pushed on. Then the Prussians took up the running. The pursuit went shouting away into the night. There was a glory in the evening sky, red as the reddened field, and high above those dreadful scenes a late lark was singing.

## XII

*"Let us now praise famous men"*

IN MANY OLD HOUSES through Great Britain and Ireland there hangs on the wall a large engraving of one of the Waterloo banquets which were held each year with the great Duke himself in the chair. No longer was he in his plain blue service coat, but attired as a Field-Marshal with a mass of glittering orders and decorations. His assembled officers were a very distinguished company, their uniforms bright with honours won in all the corners of the earth.

Near the Duke in this picture, by virtue of his rank, stands the Marquess of Anglesey, better known as Lord Paget and the Earl of Uxbridge, leaning on a stick. He has a wooden leg, a "timber toe," to use the slang then current. His own right leg he had left at Waterloo. He had been struck on the knee by almost the last shot fired by the French. He was carried to a small house opposite the village inn at Waterloo, and underwent an immediate amputation. He is alleged to have said as the limb came off, "Who would not lose a leg for such a victory?" The limb was buried in the garden beneath a tree, on which some one affixed a board with the legend:

"Here lies the Marquess of Anglesey's leg,  
Pray for the rest of his body, I beg."

He had taken a share in three expeditions to Flanders before his orders came for his fourth and last. His portrait was being painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence, who wanted to finish his right leg. Uxbridge said, "Impossible. I must be off early in the morning. The leg must wait till I come back again." He came back, but without the leg.

In 1828 he was appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. "God bless you, Anglesey, I know you are a good Protestant," said the King, when Anglesey took leave.

"Sir," he replied, "I will not be considered either Protestant or Catholic. I go to Ireland determined to act impartially between them, and without the least bias one way or the other."

He lived up to these ideals sufficiently to earn the respect and liking of all parties in Ireland. In 1846 he was made a Field-Marshal. When he died in 1854, two years after the Duke, he found a resting-place in Lichfield Cathedral.

General Sir Andrew Barnard, better known as Colonel Barnard of the 95th, would certainly have been present at the dinners. Like the Duke himself he was an Anglo-Irishman. He was a man beloved by his soldiers. In 1849 the Duke appointed him Lieutenant-Governor of Chelsea Hospital. Six years later, at the age of 82, he died in the Hospital. Before the funeral those pensioners who had served under him in the Peninsula were given leave to view the body. After the last man had left the room, the coffin was found to be covered with laurel leaves. Each man had brought one.

The Beckwiths were two more members of the 95th family party. Lieutenant-General Sir Sydney Beckwith was a battalion commander and brigadier in the Peninsula till just before the siege of Badajoz, when he handed over to Barnard. He had an ague, or malaria as it is known to-day, and never rejoined his regiment. He was the son of General John Beckwith, who led the 20th Regiment at Minden. Sydney Beckwith died in India in 1831. He was indisputably a great regimental officer, and Kincaid says of him, "He was one of the ablest outpost generals, and few officers knew so well how to make the best of a small force."

His nephew, "Charlie" Beckwith, also of the Rifles, was a brigade-major in the Light Division at Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz. He was Picton's D.A.Q.M.G. at Waterloo, and lost his left leg in the battle. Though he was given a lieutenant-colonelcy and a C.B. he soon had to go on half-pay. He was only twenty-six when his career in the Army was ended, but he quickly found his true life's work. He became a missionary to the Waldenses, a backward people in an Alpine valley in Piedmont, bringing them education and an evangelical religion. Late in life he married a Waldensian girl, and died in his chosen country in 1862.

Wellington always liked his fellow-countryman Beresford, and Beresford in his turn was the loyalist of supporters. The Duke had said of him in 1812, "The ablest man I have yet seen with the army, and that one having the largest views, is Beresford." He would surely be at the banquet, wearing the cross with clasps for twelve major actions which he had received



from the Prince Regent. After the peace of 1814 he went on duty to Portugal, but all sorts of difficulties were raised by the Portuguese Government, and he had to come home. He never took the field again, but engaged in a bitter wordy warfare with William Napier the historian about his conduct at Albuera. In the House of Lords he supported Wellington right or wrong, though for him the Duke was always right. Lord Beresford married at the age of sixty-four an heiress with a vast fortune. He went to live in Kent, and spent the rest of his life there.

There was a very distinguished general, who did not fight at Waterloo, but was one of Wellington's junior officers from Vinniero till he was wounded at San Sebastian. He was Colin Campbell, later known as Field-Marshal Lord Clyde. This was not Colin Campbell, the hero of Ahmednugger and Wellington's aide-de-camp. Actually the Colin Campbell under consideration was born in 1792, the son of a Glasgow carpenter named Macliver. Through the influence of an uncle he was given a commission as ensign in the 9th Foot. The authorities made a mistake in his commission, describing him as Colin Campbell instead of Colin Campbell Macliver, but Colin adopted the name instead of having the document altered.

He sailed from Cork with Wellesley in 1808, and was in the retreat with Sir John Moore. Campbell used to relate how for some time before reaching Coruña he had to march with bare feet, the soles of his boots being completely worn away. "He had no means of replacing them, and when he got on board ship he was unable to remove them, as from constant

wear and his inability to take them off, the leather had adhered so closely to the flesh of the legs that he was obliged to steep them in water as hot as he could bear and have the leather cut away in strips—a painful operation, as in the process pieces of the skin were brought away with it.” Colin Campbell was in the Walcheren expedition, and caught the prevalent malarial fever, which remained intermittently with him all his life. Friends helped him to purchase a majority in 1832, and later a lieutenant-colonelcy, which cost him £1,300. He was of middle height, broad and powerful. At this period he had brown hair curling all over his head. He had charming manners, but a hot Highland temper. Full of zeal, he expected much from his officers in all that concerned the welfare of their men. Frugal himself, he frowned on extravagance in mess, but he was hospitable, like most careful Scotsmen. He was strict, but friendly, and all ranks thought the world of him.

Colin Campbell served with the 9th, the 60th, and commanded the 98th, which he made one of the most efficient regiments in the Army. He took part with distinction in the Sikh War of 1848-9, and began to make his name in the Crimea, where he commanded the Highland Brigade at the Battle of the Alma. He led three famous regiments into action, the 42nd, 79th and the 93rd, with their feather bonnets nodding, their tartan plaids flowing in the breeze, and the pipes a-playing. At Balaclava, the 93rd, “a thin red streak tipped with a line of steel,” received and repulsed Russian cavalry in line. The situation was critical.

Campbell rode along the front, and said, "Remember, there is no retreat from here, men. You must die where you stand!" The answer came back, "Aye, aye, Sir Colin, we'll do that!"

At the peace, Sir Colin, now an elderly man, thought his career was over and done. He spoke thus in farewell to his Highland Brigade:

"I am now old, and shall not be called to serve any more; and nothing will remain to me but the memory of my campaigns, and the memory, too, of the enduring hardy, generous soldiers with whom I have been associated, and whose name and glory will long be kept alive in the hearts of our countrymen. When you go home, as you gradually fulfil your term of service, each to his family and his cottage, you will tell the story of your immortal advance in that victorious *échelon* up the heights of Alma, and may speak of the old brigadier who led you, and who loved you so well. . . . Though I shall be gone, the thought of you will go with me wherever I may be. . . . The pipes will never sound near me without carrying me back to those bright days when I was at your head and wore the bonnet which you gained for me, and the decorations on my breast, many of which I owe to your conduct. Brave soldiers, kind comrades, farewell!"

But the old soldier had yet to serve his Queen and country in the field. The year 1857 found him Commander-in-Chief in India with the task of quelling the Mutiny. In making ready for the relief of the Residency at Lucknow, Sir Colin came upon the 93rd once more. The regiment cheered wildly. "93rd!" he said. "You

are my own lads, I rely on you to do yourselves and me credit."

"Aye, aye, Sir Colin," came a voice from the ranks, "Ye ken us and we ken you; we'll bring the women and bairns out o' Lucknow or we'll leave our ain banes there!"

The Residency was relieved, and in due time Lucknow was stormed and taken. Colin Campbell had made one or two mistakes (what general officer does not?) but on the whole his conduct of the operations which broke the Mutiny was excellent. The Queen, who liked the frank upright old man, wrote him a warm letter of congratulation at the end of the campaign. He was created Lord Clyde and later Field-Marshal. In 1863 the tough hardy warrior found his last resting-place in Westminster Abbey.

One of Wellington's best regimental officers was John Colborne of the 52nd, whom Napier called "a man of singular talent for war." Harry Smith, no bad judge of horse or man, wrote of Colborne:

"He had more knowledge of ground, better understood the posting of picquets, consequently required fewer men on duty (he always strengthened every post by throwing obstacles—trees, stones, carts, etc.—on the road, to prevent a rush at night), knew better what the enemy was going to do, and more quickly anticipated his design than any officer; with that coolness under fire, no matter how hot, which marks a good huntsman when he finds his fox in his best country."

His name will be familiar to those that have read thus far. It only remains to say that he died in

1863 a Field-Marshal, and Baron Seaton of Scaton in Devon.

Sir Galbraith Lowry Cole was quite one of the most attractive of all Wellington's officers. He seems to have been almost as lovable as Hill. Everybody spoke well of him all through his life. He was not in the least like Hill, who was a plain English squire with more brains than most. Cole was a delightful debonair Irishman.

When war burst on the world again in 1815, the Duke summoned Cole to take command of the Fourth Division once more. Evidently the gravity of the situation was not generally understood, for, as his marriage was to take place very shortly, Cole actually wrote to Lord Fitzroy Somerset<sup>1</sup> to ask for leave. What is still more astonishing is that he got his leave, and so missed the battle. He was married three days before Waterloo, and Picton, who took his place in Flanders, was killed at the head of his troops.

Cole's wife was Lady Frances Harris, the daughter of the Earl of Malmesbury. She was 32, and Cole 42. She was eminently suitable and a very charming woman, but that outrageous bachelor Picton said, "For my part, if I'd been such a fool to marry at Cole's age, I'd have been a *damned* fool, and have married the youngest woman I could find!"

After viewing the peace illuminations in London, which were half blown out by a gusty east wind, Cole took command of an Army of Occupation in France, but this job did not last long. As Picton had done, Cole felt himself overlooked, and unemployed.

<sup>1</sup> Wellington's Military Secretary since 1811.

He applied for an appointment, and eventually accepted the offer of the governorship of Mauritius. He was an instant success, for he was popular, efficient and open-hearted. He was there for several years, and in 1828 was promoted to be Governor of the Cape of Good Hope, a colony which had been bought from the Dutch in 1814 for six million pounds sterling. Here is a picture of a reception before a dinner party at the Cape:

"Lady Frances with two or three female companions and four lovely daughters from 5 to 12 years of age; the Governor and his Aides-de-Camp military and civil; the Attorney-General and lady, the surgeon of the household and one or two young officers in the uniform of the Scottish regiments constituted the numbers. The General in the full uniform of his rank, scarlet with epaulets and cordons of gold, received us in the centre of the room, and after an interchange of salutations presented each of our company in order to his lady and then to the party in general."

During 1829 Cole travelled from end to end of the Colony, on horseback, or in the great Cape wagons. With him were his A.D.C., secretary and servants. Sometimes he camped for the night round a fire, which must often have reminded him of the bivouac fires of the Peninsula, sometimes he was entertained by the local officials. He had the usual adventures at the spruits, crossed the dreary Karroo, and visited the good farming country, hearing tales of Kaffir depredations, locusts and drought. He had a happy and successful tour of office. Colesberg perpetuates his memory,

and so does Sir Lowry's Pass, a road he made over the mountains. He was made a full general in 1830 and appointed colonel of the 27th Foot, the Inniskilling Fusiliers. A year later he came home and settled with his family in Hampshire. He was buried in 1842 with full military honours at Enniskillen, in the green island from whence he had sprung.

One of Wellington's men of the early days in India was Stapleton Cotton, who as Lord Combermere had an honoured place at the table. Wellington was seldom lavish with his praise. He said of him once, "Cotton commands the cavalry very well." Graham was more enthusiastic. He spoke of the "distinguished ability" shown by Cotton in his action against the enemy rearguard in April, 1813.

Like Hill, Cotton was a Shropshire man. He was splendid in his dress. His uniform and horse trappings were said to be worth 500 guineas ransom, and he was nicknamed *Lion d'Or*. He was a cultivated man, fond of music and the arts. His second wife was an accomplished musician (he had three wives in his time).

Perhaps Lord Combermere's greatest feat was the capture in 1825 of the immense Jat fortress of Bhurtpore with trifling loss. Thirty years later he was made a field-marshal. He was present at the wedding of Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, and died soon after, over ninety years of age.

Lieutenant-General Sir Benjamin D'Urban was Q.M.G. to Beresford's Portuguese army. His name is for ever remembered as being given to the chief city of Natal in the Union of South Africa. He was

Governor of the Cape in 1833, and he created a new colony in Natal. His end was in Montreal in 1849, as commander-in-chief of the British forces in Canada.

The reputation of Sir Augustus Frazer, Commandant Royal Horse Artillery, was so high that he prevailed upon the Duke to substitute 9-pounders for 6-pounders in Horse Artillery troops. Three out of seven of these troops had 9-pounders at Waterloo. Heavier case-shot and round-shot from guns in front of the infantry did great execution in that battle, and contributed very materially to the success. Napoleon's "darling daughters," as he called his guns, were 12-pounders.

In 1816 Frazer was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. He had two sons, both soldiers, who both died young and unmarried.

One who most assuredly kept in touch with the Duke in these after years was Thomas Graham, Lord Lynedoch. The relations between Wellington and Graham were always excellent, though it is interesting to observe that Wellington habitually addressed Graham in his letters and despatches as "My dear Sir," perhaps because he was an older man, whereas he always wrote to Hill as "My dear Hill."

After his arrival in England on his retirement from the Peninsula honours were poured upon Graham. He was made, among other things, a Burgess of Plymouth, Lord Rector of Glasgow University, and at the peace of 1814 he received a peerage as Lord Lynedoch. But his military career was not quite over. He had only been home two months when he was again called upon to serve his country. Made bold by Napoleon's defeats in east and west, the Dutch were



resolved to throw off their allegiance to their conqueror, and applied to the British for aid. Britain, not for the first or last time, was Europe's leader in the struggle against an overlord. The Government pressed Graham to take command of an expedition in such a way that he felt unable to refuse. Rest had relieved his eyes, and he wrote to Wellington a letter of explanation. It was to be his last campaign.

Sir Thomas had at first a small force of Guards and marines, with two regiments of cavalry, but later he was reinforced by some line battalions, six to seven thousand men in all. Dutch levies joined him, and he determined to attempt the capture of Bergen-op-Zoom by a sudden stroke at night. It was a failure. Though two columns scaled the defences and entered the fortress, they were eventually driven out, for the other storming parties were repulsed with heavy loss. The troops were mostly recruits, and disciplined men are essential in the confusion of a night attack. News of the surprise had leaked through to the enemy. Moreover, Sir Thomas's orders were carelessly ignored in certain vital respects. The failure does not seem to have clouded Graham's reputation, for the authorities at home were very kind and sympathetic. Both the Prince Regent and the Duke of York sent comforting messages. The latter said: "The plan was most judicious, the measure well contrived for success, and the failure, however distressing, was the result of what you could neither have foreseen nor have counteracted." Sir Thomas himself said that the fortress ought to have been taken if his orders had been obeyed. As it was, "the right column went on like a

pack of foxhounds into cover, and was annihilated before the Guards got in."

The story of the founding of the United Services Club against strong opposition has already been told. Lord Lynedoch resumed the life of a country gentleman, occupying his time in the management of his estates, horse-breeding and hunting. He won a race at Newmarket with a filly. In his seventy-fourth year he rode twenty miles to a meet of the Pytchley, and followed hounds all day. In 1829 Lord Hill, then Commander-in-Chief of the Army, gave his old friend Lynedoch the Governorship of Dumbarton Castle.

In spite of his activity, Lynedoch suffered considerably from rheumatism as the years gathered round him. The old complaint in his eyes gave him much trouble, and in 1832 he underwent an operation for cataract. He was at the birth of the new age of mechanical transport, and made in 1833 his first trip by railway from Manchester to Liverpool. In a letter to his brother-in-law he said:

"After the first impression of astonishment passes by, I would rather go with a pair of good horses on a good macadamized road, and so be my own master to call a halt when one pleases, than be carried along without a jolt at the rate of twenty miles an hour at the tail of fifteen great omnibuses full of passengers, and preceding nearly as many open carriages with benches for the operatives who chance to visit their friends. This was what was called the light train; the heavy not only draws very heavy waggons, with goods of all kinds, at a rate when they move little

less rapid, but they stop to take in passengers and receive bulky things by the way very often, which the light train was not allowed to do."

Lynedoch's last honour came to him in 1834, when King William the Fourth made him Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Regiment of Foot. At the age of ninety he was still a great horseman. He ate and drank normally, his hearing was excellent, and he could see well enough. He had the perfect manners of a Highland gentleman, and he talked well, his memory stored with doings and persons of seventy years and more. He was a big man, with a fine head. He was, in short, one of those men who make old age lovely.

In the nineties he still wandered over the Continent, Malta, Italy, France, as he was accustomed to do in his youth. The death of his old comrade-in-arms, Lord Hill, affected him very greatly. Lynedoch did not long survive his friend. His own passing, in 1843, was calm and peaceful, a fitting close to a noble life.

When Lord Hill came home after the peace of 1814, his return was in its way a triumph. At Birmingham he was presented with a sword made there. "Take it, my lord, and it will not fail you." "Trust it to me," Hill replied, "and I shall not disgrace it." At Shrewsbury there seemed no end to the festivities and the handshaking.

During his stay with the army of occupation in France after Waterloo, Hill had to apply for leave to settle some financial difficulty in which his family was involved. The Duke granted leave at once and offered Hill, should he need it, sufficient cash to free

him from all anxiety. Everybody seems to have loved Hill. From his portrait he appears sweet-tempered and dignified. One of his officers wrote of him:

“The great foundation of all his popularity with the troops was his sterling personal worth and his heroic spirit; but his popularity was increased and strengthened as soon as he was seen. He was the very picture of an English country gentleman. To those soldiers who came from the rural districts of Old England he represented home. His fresh complexion, placid face, kind eyes, kind voice, the total absence of all parade or noise in his habits, delighted them. The displeasure of Sir Rowland Hill was worse to them than the loudest anger of other generals. . . . Also his kind attention to all the wants and comforts of his men, his visits to the sick in hospital, his vigilant protection of the poor country people, his just severity to marauders, his generous treatment of such prisoners and wounded as at times fell into his hands, all made for him a place in the hearts of the soldiery.”

When the Duke became Prime Minister in 1828, he offered Hill his vacant post of Commander-in-Chief, which was accepted. Hill fulfilled his duties at the Horse Guards with the tact and discretion expected of him. Importunate officers' widows were always treated by him with kindness and consideration, but some of them talked too much and too long. Asked how he dealt with them, he replied with his charming smile, “Why, in the room where I receive them there is only one chair. I ask them to sit down. Then they are sorry to see me standing, so they do not stay very

long." He held the office till 1842, when he resigned. He felt his death upon him.

From private notes found in his desk after death it appears that he prayed for help to do his duty, to be gentle, and to keep a stout heart. His prayer was certainly granted. Politically he was not very progressive. Perhaps it was too much to expect of a man of his age that he should be. He abstained from voting on the Reform Bill division in the Lords. "The less the Army interferes in politics the better," he said, but he did not approve of the Bill. At the same time he was not impervious to all new ideas, for he was very interested in the new electric telegraph.

After Hill's triumph at Arroyo de Molinos in 1811, Wellington wrote to the Secretary of State in terms that could hardly be more commendatory, especially as they came from one who was never guilty of overstatement. He said:

"It would be particularly agreeable to me, if some mark of the favor of His Royal Highness the Prince Regent were conferred upon General Hill; his services have been always meritorious, and very distinguished in this country, and he is beloved by the whole army.

"At the passage of the Douro, he commanded the detachment which first crossed the river, after General Paget was wounded, which maintained itself against all the efforts of Soult's corps; and he commanded a division, distinguished himself, and was wounded in the battle of Talavera. He has since commanded a separate corps of this army; he has shown the greatest ability in all the movements which he has made;

and nobody could have been more successful than he has been in his late operation.

"In recommending him, as I do most anxiously, I really feel that there is no Officer to whom an act of grace and favor would be received by the army with more satisfaction than on General Hill."

"Beloved by the whole army." That might well be his epitaph.

There are many other worthies whom one would like to mention, such as Sir Denis Pack, a typical Irish fighting man, "scarred with wounds and covered with glory." He was wounded eight times in the Peninsula, and again at Waterloo. There is Sir John Hope, created Earl of Hopetoun, who died in 1823, the same year as Pack. In 1820 he had the honour of being appointed Colonel of the 42nd, the Royal Highlanders, the Black Watch. He was a brave and able man, very wealthy and extremely hospitable. To make provision for his younger children, he insured his life for £100,000. Twelve months later, though apparently strong and healthy, he suddenly died at the age of sixty. Sir James Kempt made no such insurance, but lived to be ninety. He was a small, quiet, unassuming man, an excellent and popular officer.

The three brothers Napier were all famous in their generation. Each of them attained high rank, though they moved slowly up the ladder of promotion. Steps were constantly being bought over their heads. Sir Charles James Napier, whose statue stands in Trafalgar Square, had the most remarkable career of the three. He was one of Moore's Shorncliffe officers, and served with Moore and Wellington in Spain and

Portugal. He was in the American war of 1813, but in spite of this record of active service, it was not until he was Resident in Corfu in 1825 that he reached the rank of colonel. His wife died of cholera some years later, and later still he was knighted. In 1841, Hill offered him a command in India.

Sir Charles was chief agent of the Governor-General in Scindia, and G.O.C. troops. On account of the harsh native rule in Scindia war broke out, and Sir Charles led his men to victory at Meanee, 2,800 men against 30,000 of the enemy. Musketry, bayonet and grape shot would not move the brave dark foemen, they were leaping at the British guns, they were blown away dozens at a time. At exactly the right moment Sir Charles sent his cavalry to charge the flank, and so won this amazing battle, in which generals had to fight like privates. After another action at Hyderabad, Scindia was won.

The Duke of Wellington was enthusiastic (for him) over Sir Charles's military achievements, his talent for civil administration, and his brilliant despatches. Sir Charles, speaking about the Duke's praise of him, said sincerely though grandiloquently, "The hundred-gun ship has taken the little cock-boat in tow, and it will follow for ever over the ocean of time."

Sir Charles foresaw the Mutiny, and warned the Company. He was of striking appearance, keen eye, eagle nose. His life was simple, he had a strong sense of justice and duty, and he took care of his soldiers. He was religious and generous, liberal in politics yet autocratic in government. Hasty and impetuous, he had almost as many enemies as he had friends.







His brother, Sir George Napier, who, it will be remembered, lost an arm at Ciudad Rodrigo, succeeded D'Urban as Governor of Cape Colony. He was also one of Moore's young men at Shorncliffe.

Sir William, another brother, was the author of the brilliant *History of the War in the Peninsula*. He was in Craufurd's Light Division, distinguished himself in battle after battle, and was wounded again and again. He was made a brevet lieutenant-colonel at the end of 1813. On the march to Talavera he was left behind at Placentia with pleurisy. Hearing a rumour that the British army had lost the day, he got out of bed, walked forty-eight miles to Oropesa, and took post-horses thence to Talavera. Of such stuff were the officers of Wellington's army. He had a noble, generous nature, and was "democratic" in politics. The word "democrat" signified to the average man of his class very much what "bolshevik" does to-day. Sir William was a painter and sculptor as well as a writer. He died in 1860.

Lord Fitzroy Somerset was Wellington's Military Secretary from 1811 till Waterloo. There he lost his right arm, from a shot fired from the top of La Haye Sainte farmhouse after its capture by the French. Not a word nor a groan was wrung from him at the subsequent operation. After the limb was severed he called out to the orderly, "Hallo, don't you take away that arm till I have taken off my ring!"

He was a personal friend of Wellington, whose niece he had married. The Duke wrote of him with affection and regard. In 1852 he was created Lord

Raglan, and two years later, on the outbreak of the Crimean War, he was made Field-Marshal and Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in the field. Though he had had great experience as a staff officer, Lord Raglan had never led troops into battle. His was a noble character, but he was not a success in that mismanaged campaign. His difficulties were immense, indeed Sir Evelyn Wood wrote that he was "the victim of England's unreadiness for war." The failure of the assault on the Redan hastened his death from dysentery.

The last of Wellington's officers to be mentioned here, Harry Smith, General Sir Harry Smith, is in some ways the most interesting of that famous band of brothers. He was present at the last banquet of all, but for twenty-five years Smith was serving his country in Africa and India. During the course of a long and active life he saw very little of the native land he loved so well. His dear wife, the Spanish girl of Badajoz, went with him everywhere. At the renewal of the war in 1815, Smith was appointed Brigade-Major to General Lambert, and Juana packed up to join the army in Flanders. Lambert, who had taken over the command at New Orleans after Pakenham's death, arrived with his brigade on the field of Waterloo while the battle was in progress, and was ordered to take up a position on Picton's left. After all was over, Juana, hearing from some soldiers that her Harry was dead, began a heartrending search for his body. The whole field from right to left was a mass of bodies, a sickening sight for any one and truly terrible for the young wife. She found her husband

alive and unhurt, with what relief and joy must be imagined.

Smith gained promotion and a C.B. for his share at Waterloo. He and Juana took up residence at Cambrai, where he was Town Major. He acquired a pack of hounds. The Duke, hearing this, called for Smith and a map, and divided the country between them by a line ruled across it. But this pleasant life could not last, and Smith found himself back at regimental duty in his old camp at Shorncliffe.

In 1828 he sailed for the Cape of Good Hope to join the staff of the Governor, Sir Lowry Cole, as D.A.Q.M.G. The brig in which he and Juana embarked took eleven weeks on the voyage to Table Bay. At the Cape there was plenty of sport, fox-hunting, coursing and shooting antelope and partridges. For six years they led a happy peaceful life, till Sir Lowry went home, and Sir Benjamin D'Urban took his place. Smith had liked and admired Cole, and he liked D'Urban no less. He spoke of him as "a noble soldier and an able statesman." At the end of 1834 the Kaffir tribes burst into the Colony, burning, plundering and murdering. The Governor sent Smith to the spot with full powers to take whatever measures he deemed requisite. He rode post eastwards to Grahamstown, the storm-centre, covering six hundred miles in six days, on rough tracks over mountains, and in burning heat. The measures he took were prompt and energetic, and the invading Kaffirs withdrew over the frontier. Writing to his wife on the 7th April, 1835, and telling her of the skilful action that drove the Kaffirs back, he says:

"Well, alma mia, yesterday was the anniversary of that which led to our blessed union, and, after my check at the natural fortress, which, by Jupiter, was very strong—inaccessible in short—I thought to myself, 'Well, this day so and so many years ago, I had a good licking in Badajoz breaches, and the old Duke tried something else.' So the blood rushed into my heart again as gay as ever. 'By God, I'll have them out yet.' I had no information but my spyglass, and I made a détour, and was lucky in hitting off the plan to approach."

Smith followed the Kaffirs over the border, and the Governor came up and proclaimed a new province, which Smith was left in charge. His wife joined him by travelling in a jolting Cape wagon, the only vehicle that would stand up to the rough tracks which served for roads.

Smith had a rough blustering way with the native chiefs. He would stand no nonsense and was harsh at times, though he was just, and they liked him, respected him and had faith in his word. He endeavoured to civilise and Christianise the Kaffirs, and he established a native police. Smith was as hot-tempered as an Elizabethan. Like many other famous soldiers he was sincerely religious. At Grahamstown he always read part of the Sunday morning service. He read extremely well and was very proud of it. Absentees were fined half a crown. One Sunday a dog came into the room while the service was going on and made a disturbance. Smith stood it for a while. At last in the middle of reading a prayer he suddenly shouted, "Take that damned dog away!"

He had enemies among the sentimentalists at home, and the Colonial Secretary was prevailed upon to recall him. It seems, however, that the natives were genuinely grieved to lose them both. So, undoubtedly, were the British and Dutch settlers, and the Governor. It so happened that Smith was immediately given by Lord Hill an important post, that of Adjutant-General to Her Majesty's forces in India. He sailed from the Cape in June, 1840.

The Smiths had a stormy passage. One squall swept away the topmasts and tore all the sails to shreds in a moment, but they reached Calcutta safely, "thanks be to God." In 1843 Sir Hugh Gough, a Peninsular officer, was made Commander-in-Chief in India. At this time operations had to be taken against the State of Gwalior. Smith distinguished himself at the battle of Maharajpore and was awarded a K.C.B. At this battle the Governor-General, with the ladies of his camp, including Lady Gough and Juana, rode on elephants beside the advancing columns. Juana was under fire, not by any means for the first time.

Smith took part in the battle of Moodkee in the first Sikh War. On his celebrated black Arab, Jim Crow, he seized the colour of Her Majesty's 50th Regiment and planted it in the fore-front of a Sikh column. The regiment rushed in with the bayonet. At Ferozeshah he also distinguished himself, but Aliwal was the crowning point of his career. Here he held independent command of a division. By a most brilliant set of manœuvres he utterly defeated a great Sikh army, drove it into the Sutlej, and captured every single gun, fifty-two in all, and the whole of the baggage and

stores, with remarkably little loss. It was a general's victory. "I steered the course," he said, "invariably pursued by my great master, the Duke, never needlessly to risk your troops or fight a battle without an object." Smith commanded his division, fighting hand to hand, in the victory of Sobraon under Sir Hugh Gough, a victory which brought the war to a close.

Kincaid wrote a letter to *The Times* about Sir Harry Smith's success at Aliwal. In it he says:

"Smith was never to be found off his horse until he saw every man in his brigade housed, if cover could possibly be had. His devotion to their comforts was repaid by their affection. . . . The battle of Aliwal speaks for itself, as the despatch of Sir H. Smith would alone proclaim that he had been trained under Sir John Moore and finished under the mastermind of Wellington."

Wellington's praise in the House of Lords was remarkable from such a man.

"And, my Lords, I will say upon this, I have read the account of many a battle, but I never read the account of one in which more ability, energy and experience have been manifested than in this. I know of no one in which an officer ever showed himself more capable than this officer has in commanding troops in the field."

The Duke sent to Smith the kindest messages, and a special one for Juanita, as he always called her. Smith had letters from numbers of his comrades of the Peninsula, including Barnard, Kempt, Simmons, Johnny Kincaid and Charlie Beckwith.

This little old man with the fine weather-beaten

face was given a wonderful reception in London, and in his native town of Whittlesey, near Ely. Juana by now was "a pleasant, comfortable-looking dame with a mild manner and a soft sweet voice."

In 1847 Smith returned to the Cape as Governor, and received a warm welcome. He pacified the Kaffirs, but made a mistake in humiliating a troublesome chief by publicly placing his foot on the chief's neck. He conducted a brief and successful campaign against rebel Boers, but made another mistake by shooting, after a court-martial, a Boer prisoner as a rebel.

Another Kaffir war broke out in 1850. It dragged on for two years, and victory was in sight when Smith was recalled. He had the Duke's open support, and though he was certainly not above criticism as an administrator, he was generally thought to be on the whole just and humane. He and his Juana are for ever commemorated in South Africa by the towns of Aliwal North, Harrismith, and Ladysmith.

In 1852 Sir Harry Smith was at Apsley House for the last Waterloo banquet ever held there. His health was proposed by the aged Duke himself. Later in that same year he was a pall-bearer at the Duke's funeral. Eight years after he died of angina pectoris, and was buried in Whittlesey Church in his dear England. In due time Juana was laid beside him.

As the old Duke of Wellington looked down the long table at Apsley House that warm June night in 1852, the candlelight flashed on the orders and decorations of the dwindled band of veterans in their scarlet and gold. Bent, grey-headed, his hand not so steady as once it was, the Duke toasted Sir Harry, old himself



now, but a gay young officer when his Chief was in the field. Most of the Duke's friends had gone, Hill, Graham, Cole and the rest. His old heart must have been full of memories as he rose to his feet, glass in hand. Long before the year was done he had crossed the dark river. Surely a great company of his old comrades-in-arms were waiting to salute him. Surely they saw to it that all the trumpets sounded for him upon the other side.

## APPENDIX

ARMY ORDERS ISSUED BY LORD WELLINGTON AFTER  
THE RETREAT FROM BURGOS, 1812.

*To Officers commanding Divisions and Brigades.*

“Freneda, 28th Nov., 1812.

“GENTLEMEN,—I have ordered the army into cantonments, in which I hope that circumstances will enable me to keep them for some time, during which the troops will receive their clothing, necessaries, etc., which are already in progress by different lines of communication to the several divisions of Brigades.

“But besides these objects, I must draw your attention in a very particular manner to the state of discipline of the troops. The discipline of every army, after a long and active campaign, becomes in some degree relaxed, and requires the utmost attention on the part of the general and other officers to bring it back to the state in which it ought to be for service; but I am concerned to have to observe that the army under my command has fallen off in this respect in the late campaign to a greater degree than any army with which I have ever served, or of which I have ever read. Yet this army has met with no disaster; it has suffered no privations which but trifling attention on the part of the officers could not have prevented, and for which there existed no reason

whatever in the nature of the service; nor has it suffered any hardships excepting those resulting from the necessity of being exposed to the inclemencies of the weather at a moment when they were most severe.

"It must be obvious, however, to every officer, that from the moment the troops commenced their retreat from the neighbourhood of Burgos on the one hand, and from Madrid on the other, the officers lost all command over their men. Irregularities and outrages of all descriptions were committed with impunity, and losses have been sustained which ought never to have occurred. Yet the necessity for retreat existing, none was ever made on which the troops had such short marches; none on which they made such long and repeated halts; and none on which the retreating armies were so little pressed on their rear by the enemy.

"We must look, therefore, for the existing evils, and for the situation in which we now find the army, to some cause besides those resulting from the operations in which we have been engaged.

"I have no hesitation in attributing these evils to the habitual inattention of the Officers of the regiments to their duty, as prescribed by the standing regulations of the Service, and by the orders of this army.

"I am far from questioning the zeal, still less the gallantry and spirit of the Officers of the army; and I am quite certain that if their minds can be convinced of the necessity of minute and constant attention to understand, recollect, and carry into execution the orders which have been issued for the performance of their duty, and that the strict performance of this duty is necessary to enable the army to serve the

country as it ought to be served, they will in future give their attention to these points.

“Unfortunately the inexperience of the Officers of the army has induced many to consider that the period during which an army is on service is one of relaxation from all rule, instead of being, as it is, the period during which of all others every rule for the regulation and control of the conduct of the soldier, for the inspection and care of his arms, ammunition, accoutrements, necessities and field equipments, and his horse and horse appointments; for the receipt and issue and care of his provisions; and the regulation of all that belongs to his food and the forage for his horse, must be most strictly attended to by the officers of his company or troop, if it is intended that an army, a British army in particular, shall be brought into the field of battle in a state of efficiency to meet the enemy on the day of trial.

“These are the points, then, to which I most earnestly intreat you to turn your attention, and the attention of the officers under your command, Portuguese as well as English, during the period in which it may be in my power to leave the troops in their cantonments. The Commanding Officers of regiments must enforce the orders of the army regarding the constant inspection and superintendence of the officers over the conduct of the men of their companies in their cantonments; and they must endeavour to inspire the non-commissioned officers with a sense of their situation and authority; and the non-commissioned officers must be forced to do their duty by being constantly under the view and superintendence of

the officers. By these means the frequent and discreditable recourse to the authority of the provost, and to punishments by the sentence of courts-martial, will be prevented, and the soldiers will not dare to commit the offences and outrages of which there are too many complaints, when they well know that their officers and non-commissioned officers have their eyes and attention turned towards them.

“The Commanding Officers of regiments must likewise enforce the orders of the army regarding the constant, real inspection of the soldiers’ arms, ammunition, accoutrements and necessaries, in order to prevent at all times the shameful waste of ammunition, and the sale of that article and of the soldiers’ necessaries. With this view both should be inspected daily.

“In regard to the food of the soldier, I have frequently observed and lamented in the late campaign, the facility and celerity with which the French soldiers cooked in comparison with those of our army.

“The cause of this disadvantage is the same with that of every other description, the want of attention of the officers to the orders of the army, and the conduct of their men, and the consequent want of authority over their conduct. Certain men of each company should be appointed to cut and bring in wood, others to fetch water, and others to get the meat, etc., to be cooked; and it would soon be found that if this practice were daily enforced, and a particular hour for seeing the dinners, and for the men dining, named, as it ought to be, equally as for parade, that cooking would no longer require the inconvenient length of time which it has lately been found to take,

and that the soldiers would not be exposed to the deprivation of their food at the moment at which the army may be engaged in operations with the enemy.

"You will, of course, give your attention to the field exercise and discipline of the troops. It is very desirable that the soldiers should not lose the habits of marching, and the division should march 10 or 12 miles twice in each week, if the weather should permit, and the roads in the neighbourhood of the cantonments of the division should be dry.

"But I repeat that the great object of the attention of the General and Field Officers must be to get the Captains and Subalterns of the regiments to understand and perform the duties required from them, as the only mode by which the discipline and efficiency of the army can be restored and maintained during the next campaign.

I have the honor to be, etc.,

WELLINGTON."

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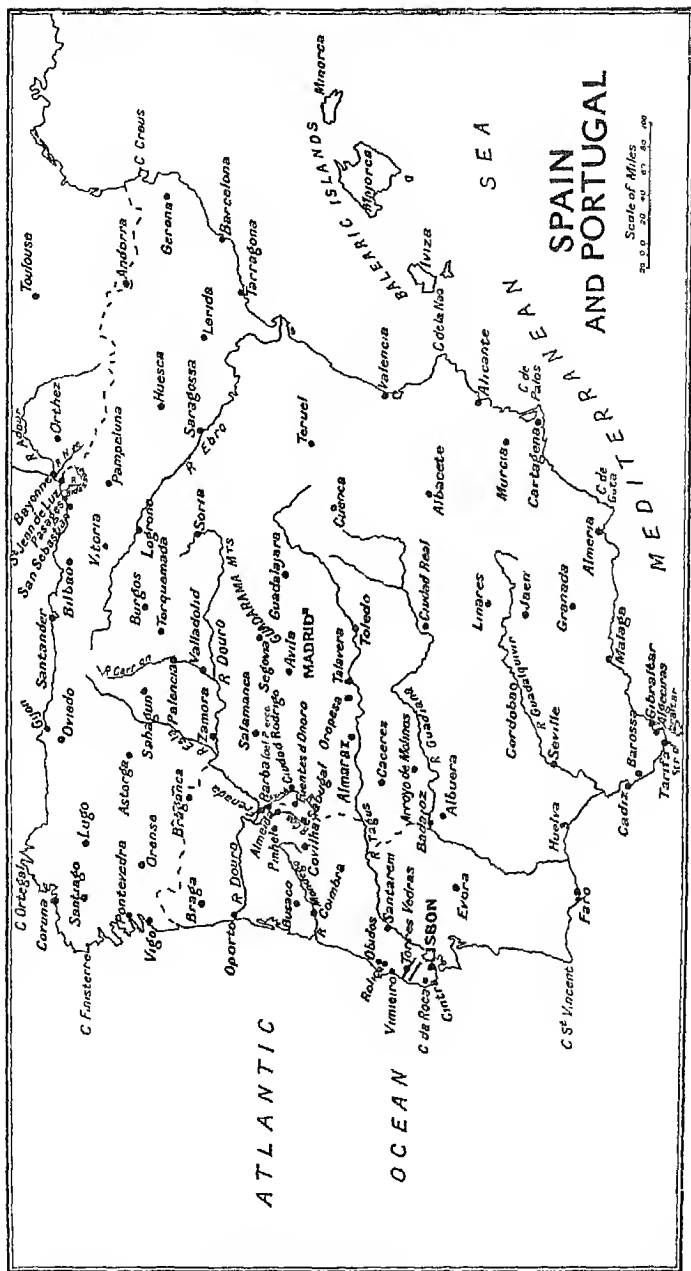
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